Ācārya Kesarī

Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī



His Life and Teachings

translated from the hindi edition of

Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja

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śrī śrī guru-gaurāṅgau jayataḥ

ĀCĀRYA KESARĪ
ŚRĪ ŚRĪMAD BHAKTI PRAJÑĀNA KEŚAVA GOSVĀMĪ

HIS LIFE AND TEACHINGS

by

tridaṇḍi-svāmī
Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja

a disciple of

the Founder of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti
and the Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭhas throughout India belonging to it,

the best amongst the 10th generation of descendants
in the *bhāgavata-paramparā* from Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu

śrī gauḍīya ācārya kesarī nitya-līlā-praviṣṭa
oṁ viṣṇupāda aṣṭottara-śata śrī

Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja

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ŚRĪ ŚRĪMAD BHAKTI PRAJÑĀNA KEŚAVA GOSVĀMĪ

HIS LIFE AND TEACHINGS

Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja

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Dedication

I am offering as *bhakti-arghya* into the lotus hands of

ācārya kesarī paramahaṁsa parivrājakācārya
aṣṭottara-śata śrī cid-vilāsa oṁ viṣṇupāda

Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja

this supremely purifying account of his divine life and qualities, which is endowed with *tattva-siddhānta* and his instructions. He is the founder of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti and the Gauḍīya Maṭhas throughout India belonging to it. He is a completely devoted follower of Śrī Svarūpa and Śrī Rūpa, and is the best amongst the 10th generation of descendants in the *bhāgavata-paramparā* from Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

He is my most worshipful *gurudeva*, and the master who fulfils all my innermost desires.

O most beloved of Mukunda! O best of the followers of Śrī Svarūpa and Śrī Rūpa! I am your most unqualified servant, but whatever I am, I belong to you alone.

O best of *gurus*, you become pleased by the insignificant service of your servants, considering it to be very great.

O Gurudeva! Kindly accept this *bhakti-arghya* from your fallen, destitute and unworthy servitor and be pleased with it.

All glories unto you!

Aspiring for the smallest particle of the mercy of Śrī Guru,

the destitute and fallen,

Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa

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Introduction
(translated from the Hindi edition)

Today I am most pleased that we have published the biography of *paramārādhya nitya-līlā-praviṣṭa oṁ viṣṇupāda aṣṭottara-śata* Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī, along with his *tattva-siddhānta*, or philosophical conceptions, and instructions. There was a great need for this important book to be published.

At the present, the preaching of *harināma-saṅkīrtana* is increasing everywhere by the efforts of the disciples and grand-disciples of *jagad-guru* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda. Śrī Śacīnandana Gaurahari, resplendent with the *bhāva* of Śrī Rādhā, is the most magnanimous form of Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa. To fulfil His long-lost desire, the Seventh Gosvāmī, Śrīla Saccidānanda Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, re-established the flow of *bhāgīrathī-bhakti*, just as Bhagīratha Mahārāja brought Bhāgīrathī Gaṅgā to Earth. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura predicted that the *mahāpuruṣa* Śrīla Prabhupāda and all his followers would be responsible for spreading Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's *viśuddha-bhakti*, supremely pure devotion, and *harināma-saṅkīrtana* throughout the entire world. My most worshipful Śrīla Gurupāda-padma was especially favoured by Śrīla Prabhupāda and consequently he dedicated his every breath to fulfil his *guru's* innermost desire. In this regard he received all kinds of help from many of his godbrothers, among whom Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja is foremost. Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī awarded *sannyāsa* to Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja. In this way he encouraged and inspired him to become an outstanding world preacher of *śuddha-bhakti* and *nāma-saṅkīrtana* in modern times.

By my *gurudeva's* causeless compassion and inspiration, I am also making a slight endeavour to fulfil his innermost desire by preaching the message of Gaurasundara throughout the world. Any success I am achieving is only due to his unique mercy, as I am an insignificant person in all respects. Seeing this, all faithful people, at home and abroad, are very eager to learn about the divine supra-mundane character, life-story and speciality of the conceptions of the *mahāpuruṣa* Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī. These people have repeatedly requested me to publish his biography. Many of my respectable godbrothers have also requested me to do this, but I had to postpone the project because I was busy with other service, and I also had some problems with my health.

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Thirteen years ago, in 1985, my godbrother *pūjyapāda parivrājakācārya* Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja, who is the President and *ācārya* of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti and devoted to transcendental knowledge, compiled in Bengali *Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī*, which is an account of his life, *tattva-siddhānta* and teachings. This book is based on *paramārādhyatama* Śrīla Gurupāda-padma's articles, essays, poems and writings, which were published in the daily *Nadiyā-prakāśa*, and the weekly and monthly *Śrī Gauḍīya* and *Śrī Gauḍīya-patrikā*. In this book he has very briefly described Śrīla Gurupāda-padma's supra-mundane life story and the speciality of his conceptions. This is extremely beneficial for those who speak Bengali, but does not benefit the vast numbers of faithful people who speak Hindi. Its absence has been a source of distress for a long time. I pray at the lotus feet of my godbrothers and especially at the lotus feet of Śrīla Gurupāda-padma, who is an ocean of compassion, to infuse the necessary power in my heart to be able to successfully present his life story in Hindi.

I had the grand opportunity to stay with Śrīla Gurupāda-padma and personally perform all kinds of *sevā* from 1945 until 1968 when he entered *aprakaṭa-līlā*. I travelled extensively with him and heard his lectures, his debates on *śāstra* with opposing parties, his discussions, and questions and answers, and kept notes on all of these. I was never silent; I was always discussing different topics with him and with great humility enquiring about deep and confidential subjects. I recorded all these in my notebook, and they have been inscribed in my heart. These exchanges with him proved very useful for me.

While we were living in Śrī Uddhāraṇa Gauḍīya Maṭha in Chuṅchurā, we repeatedly requested Śrīla Gurudeva's younger brother, Śrī Pulina Vihārī Guhaṭhākurtā, to write a booklet about Śrīla Gurudeva's life beginning with his childhood until the time he joined the *maṭha*. This he did, and on the request of our godbrothers, Śrī Yāminīkānta dāsa (MEBT), Jīraṭa High School's very able principal, wrote Śrīla Gurudeva's biography in Bengali poetry based on this booklet. Śrī Yāminīkānta dāsa also included some details about Śrīla Gurudeva's life in Caitanya Maṭha and the later inauguration of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti. *Pūjyapāda* Vāmana Mahārājajī took help from this for his biography on Śrīla Gurudeva. These books are primary materials for this present edition, together with my own notebook and memories. I personally heard from Śrīla Gurudeva's mouth the many incidents from his own life and from the lives of Śrīla Prabhupāda, Śrīla Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja and Śrī Vaṁśīdāsa Bābājī Mahārāja. I have divided Śrīla Gurudeva's biography into eight parts. The faithful readers may carefully read the different subject matters in this book and judge the results for themselves.

My humble prayer at Śrīla Gurupāda-padma's lotus feet is that he may shower abundant kindness upon all who helped bring forward this valuable book and engage them in his confidential service.

On the occasion of the appearance day
of Śrī Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna
Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja,
Samvat 2055 (3 February 1999)

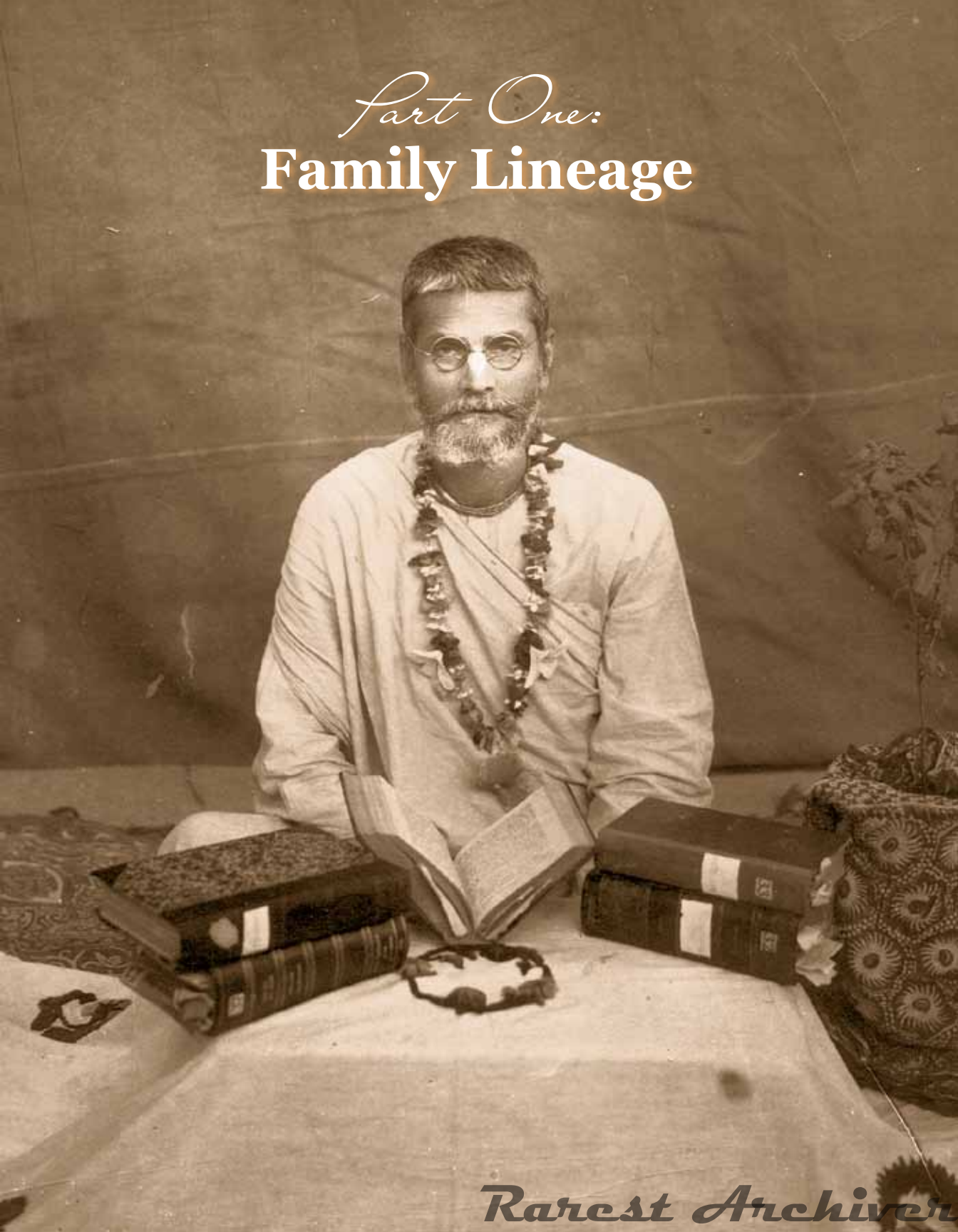
An aspirant for a particle of mercy
of Śrī Hari, Guru and Vaiṣṇavas,

Tridaṇḍi Bhikṣu
Śrī Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa

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Part One:

Family Lineage



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Bhāgavata guru-paramparā

For the welfare of the world, the supremely merciful Śrī Bhagavān and His dear associates descend, bringing the gifts of their instructions according to the needs of the times. These personalities drive out all atheists and their conceptions, which are averse to *dharma*, by establishing *sanātana-dharma* in the form of *śuddha-bhakti*, the means for the living entities to attain their eternal welfare.

In the present age, which is under the powerful influence of Kali, Śrī Gaurasundara, the munificent incarnation of Kali-yuga, saves the fallen souls by bestowing *prema*, divine love of God, which had not been given previously. His followers, who are directly in the line of Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara and Rūpa Gosvāmī, have appeared on this Earth as Śrī Gaurasundara's potencies, playing the role of preceptors, or *ācāryas*, who immerse the ignorant living entities, intoxicated by materialism, in pure love of God (*śuddha-prema-dharma*).

By the desire of Śrī Bhagavān, these preceptors use infallible scriptural evidence and irrefutable logic to thoroughly demolish the non-Vedic doctrine of Śrī Śaṅkara Ācārya. This philosophy, which is known as *brahma-vāda*, describes the Supreme Absolute Truth (*para-brahma*) as featureless (*nirviśeṣa*) and without potencies (*niḥśaktik*). It is a concealed form of Buddhism (*bauddha-vāda*), monism (*advaita-vāda*) or impersonalism (*māyāvāda*). In its place, the *ācāryas* have established the authentic and transcendental *bhagavat-tattva*, which establishes *para-brahma* as endowed with all transcendental qualities (*saviśeṣa*), possessing all energies (*sarva-śaktimān*), and who is the embodiment of all spiritual mellows (*rasa-svarūpa*).

Foremost among these followers of Śrī Gaurasundara is the most worshipable *ācārya kesarī pāṣaṇḍa-gajaika-siṁha oṁ viṣṇupāda aṣṭottara-śata* Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, the lion-like preceptor who destroys the elephants of atheism.

Śacīnandana Gaurahari, who is Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself possessing the specialties of all the previous incarnations and radiant with the mood and lustre of Śrīmatī Rādhikā, appeared five hundred years ago, together with His personal associates. In a very short time, through the process of *nāma-saṅkīrtana*, or the congregational chanting of the holy names, Śrī Gaurahari spread *bhakti-rasa*, the mellows of pure devotion, throughout the entire world. In order to fulfil the Lord's innermost desire, His dear associate, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, revealed pure *bhakti-rasa* in his *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, *Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi* and other texts.

Recently, *jagad-vareṇya aṣṭottara-śata* Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda, respected throughout the world as

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the crown jewel of the *ācāryas* in the line of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, powerfully inundated the whole planet with a wave of pure *bhakti*. *Oṁ viṣṇupāda* Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī is also the foremost among the *mahāpuruṣas*, or great, perfected personalities, who sincerely and selflessly contributed to spreading the teachings of Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Real knowledge of transcendental matters can never be obtained through the material senses, for the Supreme Lord, devotion and the devotee are all beyond the purview of sense perception. In this world one may be able to describe the character of literary, historic, political, munificent or moral personalities, along with their identity and circumstances of birth. However, it is not possible to describe with the material senses the character of the Supreme Lord's devotees, for they are perceived purely by their own mercy. We can only understand something about the extraordinary transcendental character of Bhagavān's devotees when, by their grace, they display their character in the pure heart of a person devoted to the service of the Lord.

yasya deve parā bhaktir
yathā deve tathā gurau
tasyaite kathitā hyarthāḥ
prakāśante mahātmanaḥ

Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad (6.23)

All the hidden meanings of the Śrutis are revealed only in the heart of that great soul who has the highest transcendental devotion towards Śrī Bhagavān and also His representative, *śrī gurudeva*.

Adhokṣaja-vastu (transcendental reality) has no birth or death and no father or mother; this is true of Vaiṣṇavas as well. They are not subject to birth and death, nor do they belong to any worldly family, caste or order of life. In this world the Vaiṣṇavas' material situations are only a performance of manifest (*prakaṭa*) and unmanifest (*aprakaṭa*) pastimes. By the desire of Śrī Bhagavān, Vaiṣṇavas appear in this world in a particular family, or lineage, but the *śāstras* forbid us to think that they have a material origin.

arcye viṣṇau śīlā-dhīr-guruṣu nara-matir
vaiṣṇave jāti-buddhir
viṣṇor vā vaiṣṇavānāṁ kali-mala-mathane
pāda-tīrthe 'mbu-buddhiḥ
śrī-viṣṇor-nāmni mantre sakala-kaluṣa-he
śabda-sāmānya-buddhir
viṣṇau sarveśvareśe tad-itara-sama-dhīr-
yasya vā nārakī saḥ

Padma Purāṇa

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“Transcendental knowledge which is received through the *bhāgavata guru-paramparā* is the real identity of the Vaiṣṇavas.”

> One becomes a resident of hell if he thinks the deity to be mere stone; *gurudeva* to be an ordinary human being; the Vaiṣṇavas to belong to some caste; the water which has washed the lotus feet of Viṣṇu or the Vaiṣṇavas to be ordinary water; the *mantra* and holy names of Viṣṇu, which destroy all sins, to be ordinary sounds; and the Supreme Lord Viṣṇu to be equal to the demigods.

Therefore, according to the transcendental scriptures, those who attempt to determine a Vaiṣṇava’s birth, family, caste, etc., in the material world are fools, hypocrites and offenders to that Vaiṣṇava. The *sātvata-śāstras* prohibit such considerations for Vaiṣṇavas: “*na karma-bandhanaṁ janma vaiṣṇavānāṁ ca vidyate* – Vaiṣṇavas are not under the jurisdiction of birth and *karma*” (*Padma Purāṇa*).

Śruti[1], Smṛti[2] and the spotless Purāṇa, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, state the indisputable definition of a Vaiṣṇava family lineage: it is firmly established in the meaning of the transcendental knowledge of the Vedas (*āmnāya*), in other words, in the teachings of the *bhāgavata guru-paramparā*. My most worshipful Śrīla Gurupāda-padma, Śrī Śrīmad

1 Editor: Śruti: infallible knowledge which was received by Brahmā or by the great sages in the beginning of creation and which descends in disciplic succession from them; the original four Vedas and the Upaniṣads.

2 Editor: Smṛti: the supplementary Vedic literature, which includes the six Vedāṅgas, the *dharma-śāstras*, Purāṇas and the Itihāsas.



Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, has personally described his own Vaiṣṇava family succession in *Gauḍīya Gīti-guccha*, the songbook that he compiled and edited. He describes it following in the footsteps of Śrī Kavi Karṇapūra, Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa and Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.

śrī-kṛṣṇa-brahma-devarṣi
bādarāyaṇa-saṁjñakān
śrī-madhva-śrī-padmanābha-
śrīman-nṛhari-mādhavān

akṣobhya-jayatīrtha-
śrī-jñānasindhu dayānidhīn
śrī-vidyānidhi-rājendra-
jayadharmān kramādvayam

puruṣottama-brahmaṇya-
vyāsatīrthāṁś ca saṁstumaḥ
tato lakṣmīpatiṁ-śrīman-
mādhavendraṅca bhaktitaḥ

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Sārvabhauma Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja



Saccidānanda Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

tacchiṣyān śrī-śvarādvaita-nityānandān
jagad-gurūn devamīśvaraśiṣyaṁ
śrī-caitanyañca bhajāmahe śrī-kṛṣṇa-
premadānena yena nistāritaṁ jagat

mahāprabhu-svarūpa-
śrī-dāmodaraḥ priyaṁ karaḥ
rūpa-sanātanau dvau ca
gosvāmi-pravarau prabhu

śrī-jīvo raghunāthaśca
rūpapriyo mahāmatiḥ
tatpriyaḥ kavirāja-
śrī-kṛṣṇadāsa-prabhurmataḥ

tasya priyottamaḥ
śrīlaḥ sevāparo narottamaḥ
tadanugata-bhaktaḥ
śrī-viśvanāthaḥ saduttamaḥ

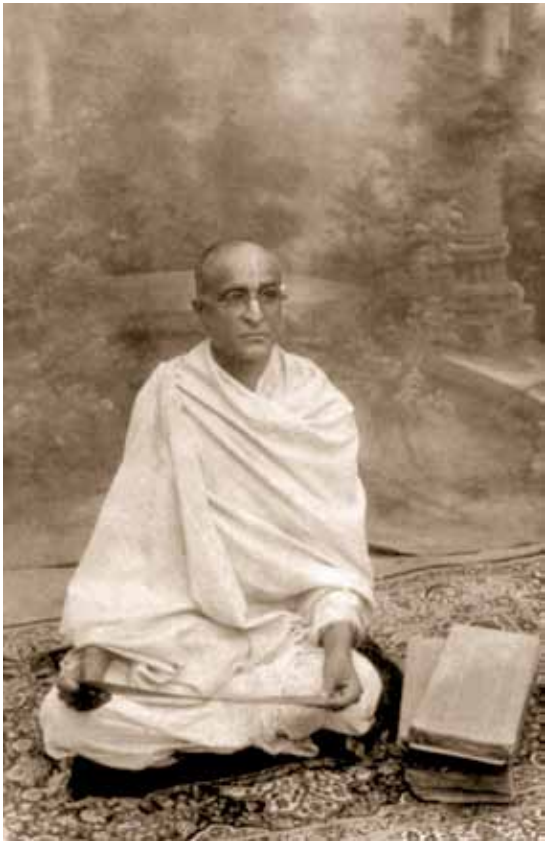
tadāsaktaś ca gauḍīya-
vedāntācārya-bhūṣaṇam
vidyābhūṣaṇapāda-śrī-
baladevasadāśrayaḥ

vaiṣṇava-sārvabhaumaḥ
śrī-jagannātha-prabhustathā
śrī-māyāpura-dhāmnastu
nirdeṣṭā sajjana-priyaḥ

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Mahā-bhāgavata Śrīla Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja



Jagad-guru Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda

śuddha-bhakti-pracārasya
mūlībhūta ihottamaḥ
śrī-bhakativinodo devastat
priyatvena viśrutaḥ

tadabhinna-suhṛdavaryo
mahābhāgavatottamaḥ
śrī-gaura-kiśoraḥ sākṣād
vairāgyaṁ vigrahāśritam

māyāvādi-kusiddhānta-
dhvāntarāśi-nirāsakaḥ
viśuddha-bhakti-siddhāntaiḥ
svāntaḥ padmavikāśakaḥ

devo 'sau paramo haṁso
mattaḥ śrī-gaura-kīrttane
pracārācārakaryeṣu
nirantaraṁ mahotsukaḥ

hari-priya-janairgamya
oṁ viṣṇupādapūrvakaḥ
śrī-pādo bhaktisiddhānta
sarasvatī mahodayaḥ

sarve te gauravaṁśyāś ca
paramahaṁsa-vigrahāḥ
vayaṅca praṇatā
dāsāstaducchiṣṭa grahāgrahāḥ

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Bhāgavata-paramparā
[by Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura]

kṛṣṇa haite catur-mukha, haya kṛṣṇa-sevonmukha,
brahmā haite nāradera mati
nārada haite vyāsa, madhva kahe vyāsa-dāsa,
pūrṇaprajña padmanābha gati

nṛhari-mādhava-vaṁśe, akṣobhya-paramahaṁse,
śiṣya boli' aṅgīkāra kare
akṣobyera śiṣya jaya-tīrtha nāme paricaya,
tāṅra dāsye jñānasindhu tare

tāhā haite dayānidhi, tāṅra dāsa vidyānidhi,
rājendra haila tāṅhā haite
tāṅhāra kiṅkara jaya-dharma nāme paricaya,
paramparā jāna bhāla mate

jayadharma-dāsye khyāti, śrī-puruṣottama yati,
tāhā ha'te brahmaṇya-tīrtha sūri
vyāsatīrtha tāṅra dāsa, lakṣmīpati vyāsa-dāsa,
tāhā haite mādhavendra-purī

mādhavendra-purī-vara, śiṣya-vara śrī-īśvara,
nityānanda śrī-advaita vibhu
īśvara-purīke dhanya, karilena śrī-caitanya,
jagad-guru gaura mahāprabhu

mahāprabhu śrī-caitanya, rādhā-kṛṣṇa nahe anya,
rūpānuga janera jīvana
viśvambhara priyaṅkara, śrī-svarūpa dāmodara,
śrī-gosvāmī rūpa-sanātana

rūpa-priya mahājana, jīva raghunātha hana,
tāṅra priya kavi kṛṣṇadāsa
kṛṣṇadāsa-priya-vara, narottama sevā-para,
jāṅra pada viśvanātha āśa

viśvanātha bhakta-sātha, baladeva jagannātha,
tāṅra priya śrī-bhaktivinoda
mahā-bhāgavata-vara, śrī-gaura-kiśora-vara,
hari-bhajanete jāṅra moda



śrī-vārṣabhanavī-varā, sadā sevya-sevā-parā,
tāṅhāra dayita-dāsa nāma
ei saba harijana, gaurāṅgera nija-jana,
tāṅdera ucchiṣṭe mora kāma

Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the original *jagad-guru* of the Śrī Brahma-Madhva-Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *guru-paramparā*. It was He who transmitted the science of pure devotion, or *śuddha-bhakti,* to the heart of the four-headed Śrī Brahmā. Śrī Brahmājī, in turn bestowed this knowledge on Śrī Nārada, who gave it to Śrī Vedavyāsa. Vedavyāsajī accordingly passed on the knowledge in the line of *paramparā* to Śrī Madhvācārya. It was then imparted from *guru* to disciple in this order: Śrī Padmanābha, Śrī Nṛhari, Śrī Mādhava, Śrī Akṣobhya, Śrī Jayatīrtha, Śrī Jñānasindhu, Śrī Dayānidhi, Śrī Vidyānidhi, Śrī Rājendra, Śrī Jayadharma, Śrī Puruṣottama Tīrtha, Śrī Brahmaṇya Tīrtha, Śrī Vyāsa Tīrtha and Śrī Lakṣmīpati Tīrtha

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"This *bhāgavata guru-paramparā*, beginning from *jagat-pitā* Śrī Kṛṣṇa and extending to Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Prabhupāda, is Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja's only family lineage."

Ācārya, who was the *guru* of Śrī Mādhavendra Purī. Śrī Mādhavendra Purī's disciples were Śrī Īśvara Purī, Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu and Śrī Advaita Ācārya. *Jagad-guru* Śrī Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu made Śrī Īśvara Purī very fortunate by accepting the shelter of his lotus feet. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's beloved Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara followed in the line, and was succeeded by His dear Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī and Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī. Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī and Śrī Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī accepted the shelter of Śrī Rūpa's lotus feet. The object of mercy of these two was Śrī Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī.

Śrīla Kavirāja Gosvāmī's beloved disciple was Narottama, and Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura's disciple was Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura. Śrī Cakravartī Ṭhākura's object of mercy was Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, who was followed in line by *sārvabhauma* Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura accepted the shelter of Śrī Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī's lotus feet. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's dear-most disciple was *mahā-bhāgavata* Śrī Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī. Śrī Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī's object of love was Śrī Vārṣabhānavī-dayita dāsa *jagad-guru* Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, who flooded the entire universe with the flow of *prema-bhakti*, as it was practised and taught by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Among Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's beloved disciples, the foremost is *jagad-guru* Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja. These Vaiṣṇavas are all Śrī Hari Gaurasundara's dear associates and it is our desire to honour their remnants.

This *bhāgavata guru-paramparā*, beginning from *jagat-pitā* Śrī Kṛṣṇa and extending to Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Prabhupāda, is Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja's only family lineage.

Our most worshipful Śrīla Gurudeva humbly revealed his own identity during the Navadvīpa-dhāma *parikramā* of 1948. Grief-stricken and crying in great separation at *jagad-guru* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda's *samādhi* in Māyāpura, Śrīla Gurudeva said, "Svayam Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa is supremely merciful. Śrī Gaurasundara, non-different from Śrī Kṛṣṇa, is also supremely merciful. Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu is the deity of mercy personified, and Śrīman Mahāprabhu's associates, the six Gosvāmīs, are also causelessly merciful. These things I have heard. Without doubt I was present in one form or another during their time, but no one bestowed mercy upon me, because they knew me to be extremely heinous and sinful. But Śrīla Prabhupāda pulled me up by my hair. I am a fallen wretch and a staunch materialist with an uncontrolled nature, but he has placed me as a particle of dust at his lotus feet. He who, due to his causeless mercy, is even more exalted than the Lord Himself, has today made me his own."

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Describing his family tree in this speech, *paramārādhya* Śrī Gurudeva refers to his relationship with *jagat-pitā* Śrī Kṛṣṇa; Śrī Śacīnandana Gaurahari; the *akhaṇḍa guru-tattva* Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu, who is non-different from Baladeva Prabhu; and Their dear-most associate, *jagad-guru* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda. Nowhere did he mention his material family lineage.



Appearance

Oṁ viṣṇupāda Śrī Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja took his birth on 24 January 1898, Māghī-kṛṣṇa-tṛtīyā, in a respected and wealthy Vaiṣṇava family in the Guhaṭhākurtā dynasty in the renowned village of Vānarīpāḍā, within the Variśāla district of East Bengal (present-day Baṅgladeśa). This Guhaṭhākurtā lineage was celebrated for having produced many eminent Vaiṣṇava saints, prominent scientists, government officials and scholars. He appeared as a divine child, illuminating all the directions with light. His father's name was Śrīyuta Śaratcandra Guhaṭhākurtā and his mother's name was Śrīyutā Bhuvana-mohinī-devī. Śrīyuta Śaratcandra Guhaṭhākurtā was religious, truthful, munificent, humble, and above all, a devotee of the Supreme Lord. He had a gentle disposition and never became angry. Although he held a high government post in the law courts, he never once accepted a bribe. His qualities charmed everyone in the courts, from the highest-ranking person to the lowest.

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"Some day in the future this boy will be a famous transcendental and brilliant *mahāpuruṣa*..."

Śrī Guhaṭhākurtāji was an initiated disciple of the well-known saint, Śrī Vijaya-kṛṣṇa Gosvāmī, of the Advaita *parivāra*[3]. Śrī Vijaya-kṛṣṇa Gosvāmī had formerly been a renowned *siddha-yogī*, but after hearing about *śuddha-bhakti* as preached and practised by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, he became attracted to Vaiṣṇavism. Thus, Śrī Guhaṭhākurtā was also a staunch follower of Vaiṣṇavism. He regularly studied *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* and other devotional literature, and he daily practised the various aspects of *bhakti* such as *harināma-kīrtana*, *japa*, *pūjā* and meditation. Municipal magistrates, judges, eminent lawyers and respected and learned persons in the community came to his home to hear his explanations of the *Gītā* and other religious texts.

Śrī Gurudeva's mother, Śrīyutā Bhuvana-mohinī-devī, belonged to a family of landholders. She was respected as a wealthy and highly learned woman who was dedicated to morality, and was very serious and thoughtful. She was skilled in all kinds of work, and in her father-in-law's house, she was responsible for housekeeping as well as all the tasks related to the land. On the one hand, Bhuvana-mohinī-devī was a veritable deity of motherly affection and compassion. On the other hand, she was a strict matriarch for her sons and subordinates. She would use her great expertise to smooth out and solve all the extremely complicated problems related to the land.

Everyone became happy when the transcendental infant *mahāpuruṣa* (great soul) appeared in the home of this virtuous and prosperous couple. The newborn child had effulgent eyes and a beautiful physique endowed with all auspicious signs. This vision of his beauty enchanted the elder men and women of the neighbourhood, inspiring them to praise and bless both the parents and the child. Seeing the baby's golden-toned limbs and splendorous, fair, moon-like face, people started to call him 'Jonā', which is short for *jyotsnā*, or moonbeam.

The renowned astrologers of the area were amazed upon seeing the auspicious zodiac sign (*rāśi*), lunar mansion (*nakṣatra*), lunar day (*tithi*), particular time (*vāra*) and so forth in the chart, for the time of birth of this child. With great attention they advised Śrī Śarat Bābū to take special care of the child's upbringing. They prophesied, "Some day in the future this boy will be a famous transcendental and brilliant *mahāpuruṣa*. According to his horoscope, this boy will become *bhakti-prajñāna*, an eminent scholar of devotional scriptures. He will also be a *brahmacārī-sannyāsī* and an *ācārya*. He will be brave, wealthy, renounced, a conqueror of the senses, tolerant, steady-minded, munificent and a topmost religious *mahāpuruṣa*. He will have a tall, beautiful body possessing exquisite qualities."

Later, the predictions of those astrologers were supported by Śrī Vaikuṇṭhanātha Mahodaya, the famous astrologer of Narmā, a village within the Medinīpura district. He was astonished to see Śrī Gurudeva's horoscope and with delight he wrote, "This person took birth at the moment when all the stars were in auspicious positions (*yogas*). Additionally, the inner state of Jupiter is present in the middle part, which will begin to

3 Editor: the disciplic succession of Śrī Advaita Ācārya

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give good results from the age of four years and three months. After that, a *rāja-yoga* is indicated which denotes inexhaustible, miraculous service to Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the controller of Vidhātā (Brahmā), who controls the destiny of the living beings. This signifies that he will be the vehicle for the flow of inconceivable potency of pure Vaiṣṇavas that will bring inner realizations to the bewildered *jīvas*. This day will come soon. Additional reflections are not required. In a short time countless pure Vaiṣṇavas will come together to praise the limitless glory of the unparalleled *jagad-guru* Śrīla Sarasvatī Prabhupāda."

The scholars and astrologers named the baby Śailendranātha Guhaṭhākurtā, but he was popularly known as Jonā. The respected Śrī Śarat Bābū called his dear son Janārdana. Later on the boy became known as Vinoda-bihārī. Seeing the astonishing transcendental beauty of her son and thinking it too good to be true, Śrīyutā Bhuvana-mohinī was constantly fearful that the boy would live a short life. She always prayed intensely to the Lord to grant her son a long life.

Childhood

There is a proverb, "Coming events cast their shadows before them." Even from early childhood remarkable events occurred in Śrī Gurudeva's life. Once, his affectionate mother was visiting Dūdhal, her father's village. She gave the baby a full-body oil massage, put him to sleep in the morning sunshine in the courtyard, and then busied herself nearby with household chores. Suddenly, a big eagle caught the tiny baby in its talons and flew into the sky. Seeing this, the mother screamed, neighbours started shouting, and everyone began to chase the huge bird. Near the village was a pond in which large pieces of betel nut bark were floating like little boats. For some reason – who can tell why? – the eagle flew down and slowly placed the child on the boat-like bark. Seeing this, the people came running, lifted the boy from the water, and put him in his mother's lap. The mother, who was almost unconscious, again returned to life. Everyone concluded that this was not an ordinary child and that Bhagavān had sent him for some special purpose.

In the future, this child would become the founder-*ācārya* of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti and would fulfil the Lord's and His devotees' innermost desire. He would become renowned throughout the world as Śrī Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, a preacher of the pure *vaiṣṇava-dharma* and pure *bhakti* as practised and taught by Śrīman Mahāprabhu.

From his very childhood, Vinoda-bihārī began to attract everyone with his transcendental qualities. Women and men, young and old, all loved him dearly. Śrī Śaratcandra Mahodaya took his son to temples, *āśramas*, religious assemblies and any place where discourses on *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* or the *Gītā* were being held. Vijaya-kṛṣṇa Gosvāmī also had an *āśrama* in the village Vānarīpāḍā, and Śrī Śarat Bābū was the object of love for all of Vijaya-kṛṣṇa Gosvāmī's disciples. He had the qualities of a *sādhu* and was extremely good-natured. Bhuvana-mohinī-devī was truthful, bright, altruistic, dedicated to morality, and above all an ideal religious and learned woman. In this

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way, the boy's upbringing began in a religious atmosphere.

By the time Vinoda-bihārī was eight years old, his family had moved to the district of Noyākhali and his father was employed in the Court of Lakṣmīpura. It was at this time that Śrī Śarat Bābū left this world. He had made suitable arrangements for his sons' education while he was present, but after he passed away, Bhuvana-mohinī-devī had to face the entire responsibility of the children's upbringing and education.

While his father was alive, Vinoda-bihārī had studied at the National School in Noyākhalī, which offered both academic education and vocational training. In addition to his textbook studies, Vinoda-bihārī took a great interest in craftsmanship. The bench, stool and table he made in school were used in his home for a long time. After his father's demise, he returned to his paternal village of Vānarīpāḍā and enrolled at the local secondary school. During this period, the foundation stone was laid for the development of his learning and multifarious talents.

During those days, social service was acknowledged as an essential element in the building of character in a student, its ultimate aim being human welfare through ethical endeavours. Vinoda-bihārī was an exceptionally brilliant student with an incomparable ability for organization. His managerial skills always reflected high standards of religion, justice and morality. At that time the community had no organization to help the poor and sick. Together with many enthusiastic youths, Vinoda-bihārī established a society which cared for the poor and the sick free of charge, even those with contagious diseases. Destitute people were offered various forms of aid, including food and clothes. The young men involved were generous and compassionate to the wretched and distressed, and their organization quickly became well-known.

One day Vinoda returned home from school late in the evening. His anxious mother was standing at the entrance of the house waiting for him with a stick in her hand. Bhuvana-mohinī-devī, the forceful daughter of land barons, was strict with her children. As soon as Vinoda-bihārī entered the house, she grabbed his hand and angrily demanded, "Where have you been? Tell me! You are becoming independent, wandering around here and there at night in the company of street children. I do not want this. Where were you? Speak up!"

The boy stood calm and silent, completely without fear. When his mother again demanded an answer, he replied in a serene voice, "Some of us students have established a charitable organization that serves the destitute, helpless, poor and sick in a variety of ways. You give me money for snacks and I use it to help these people. We also go from house to house, begging food and clothing for them. Today a destitute, childless woman was suffering from cholera. After collecting money, we arranged for her to get medical treatment and a good diet. I have spent the whole day up until now doing this, and I haven't even bathed or eaten. Now this old woman is beginning to recover. That is what I have been doing the whole day." As soon as his mother heard this, the stick fell from her hands and her eyes filled with tears. Unable to utter a word, she embraced her son with both arms, and promised that in the future she would never again try to discipline him. What mother would not feel herself successful to have given birth to such a child? In the future that same boy, seeing the living entities caught in the grip of *māyā*, would accept *sannyāsa* and make a promise to free the *jīvas* from that bondage forever.

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Student life, protection of the properties and the beginning of spiritual life

Vinoda-bihārī's mother gave him the full responsibility of dealing with their tenants while he was only in the eighth grade. Expertise in legal matters and administration is not usually apparent in one so young. However, Vinoda-bihārī was honoured and renowned among the tenants for his intelligence, generosity, mercifulness and his subtle feel for justice.

In high school, Śrī Vinoda-bihārī studied statistics, and then went on to study science in college. He was skilled in all kinds of sports, especially football, and he was the captain of the football squad as well as other teams and clubs. While in college, Vinoda-bihārī was awarded a prize every year for outstanding social welfare work. The headmaster of the college, observing his organizational ability, outstanding character and his record of social welfare work, kept him in his own house and personally tutored him with affection.

During this period, Vinoda-bihārī worked with other students to establish the monthly magazine, *Prasūna*. Everyone, students and teachers alike, praised his poems and essays that appeared in this magazine. Along with other intelligent and influential fellow students, he also established a society for the protection of religious values. It was then that Śrī Vinoda-bihārī proclaimed that he would remain a *brahmacārī* for the rest of his life.

At that time, the non-violent civil disobedience movement under Mahātmā Gāndhī's leadership was striving for India's independence. Not caring for their own lives, people all over India were joining the struggle for independence. The student community was also involved and Vinoda-bihārī, who was still in high school, became a revolutionary leader. He took part in preparing a revolt against the British rule, but as he was hiding in the jungles, the police were unable to apprehend him.

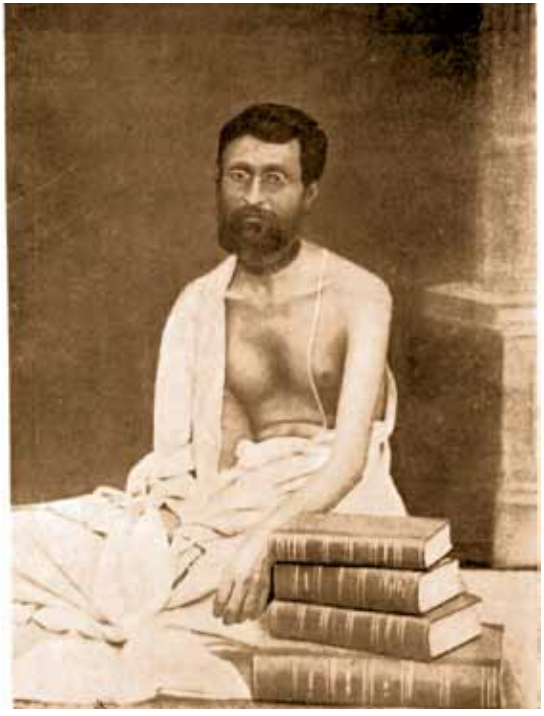
Even while this was going on, Vinoda-bihārī still passed the entrance examinations for Uttarapāḍā College near Kolkata. After studying there for one year, he shifted to Daulatapura College. There, he astonished the principal and professors with his explanations of the difficult and complicated philosophical verses of *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. Sometimes he would argue with atheistic professors about transcendental subject matters, rendering them speechless with his irrefutable arguments and scriptural conclusions.

Vinoda-bihārī was gradually developing a taste for hearing *Bhagavad-gītā*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* and other devotional literature, and also for serving Śrī Bhagavān and His devotees. Consequently, he was becoming less involved in the godless society. He was losing his attraction for the university's atheistic education and for receiving a degree, and was instead becoming extremely eager to understand the real nature of the Supreme Truth. A verse from *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Ādi-līlā* 9.41) shook his heart:

> *bhārata-bhūmite haila manuṣya janma yāra*
> *janma sārthaka kari' kara para-upakāra*
>
> Anyone who has taken a human birth in the land of India should make his life successful by striving for the highest benefit of all others.

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"In 1915, Vinoda-bihārī went with his two aunts for *darśana* of *jagad-guru* Śrīla Prabhupāda at the time of Śrī Gaura-pūrṇimā... On that occasion, Vinoda-bihārī took a firm vow to follow in the footsteps of this *mahāpuruṣa* for the rest of his life."



Jagad-guru Śrīla Prabhupāda

What is the true nature of the soul (*ātmā*) and Supersoul (Paramātmā)? How is it possible to achieve the real success of human life? He now began to inquire into these transcendental subject matters.

While Śrī Vinoda-bihārī was residing in Vānarīpāḍā, he had become close to his two learned and religious paternal aunts, Śrīyutā Sarojavāsinī and Priyatamā-devī. They were respectively the first and second female disciples of the world-renowned *jagad-guru* Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda. Both women were well-versed in *bhakti-śāstra* and were accomplished poets and authors. Their instructions on *bhakti* and their devotional lives had a great influence on their nephew.

In 1915, Vinoda-bihārī went with his two aunts for *darśana* of *jagad-guru* Śrīla Prabhupāda at the time of Śrī Gaura-pūrṇimā. From this first *darśana* onward, Vinoda-bihārī was drawn to Śrīla Prabhupāda and his brilliant teachings. On that occasion, Vinoda-bihārī took a firm vow to follow in the footsteps of this *mahāpuruṣa* for the rest of his life and devote his full energy to serving him. After taking part in the nine-day Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma *parikramā* and after hearing *hari-kathā*, he offered himself completely at the lotus feet of Śrīla Prabhupāda on the day of Śrī Gaura-pūrṇimā. Understanding him to be worthy, Prabhupāda accepted him as his dear disciple and gave him *harināma*. Now the life of Vinoda became exclusively dedicated to religion.

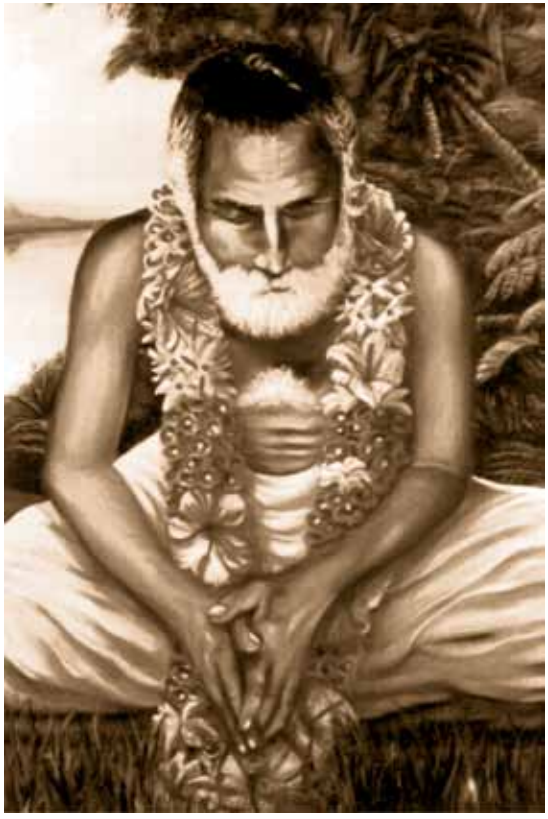
A few days after Śrī Gaura-pūrṇimā, Śrīla Prabhupāda gave brilliant lectures to the remaining group of devotees. It was then that he expressed his resolve to establish *maṭhas* on each of the nine islands of Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma, to establish other Gauḍīya Maṭhas and centres for preaching *śuddha-bhakti* in the prominent cities of Bengal and throughout India, and to establish a printing press for the printing and distribution of transcendental periodicals, which would propagate the philosophical conclusions of pure devotion everywhere, in all the languages of India.

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Hearing her *gurudeva* express this intention, Śrīyutā Sarojavāsinī-devī became happy at heart, but she inquired from Śrīla Prabhupāda, "Right now, here at Yogapīṭha, there are not even enough *brahmacārīs* to play the gongs and ring the bells at *āratī*. How will so many *maṭhas* be taken care of?" At that time the youth Vinoda-bihārī was sitting nearby, listening with full concentration to Śrīla Prabhupāda's *hari-kathā*. Śrīla Prabhupāda pointed to him and said, "Vinoda-bihārī will manage all the *maṭhas* and preaching centres." This prediction later came true. By Śrīla Prabhupāda's blessings, Vinoda-bihārī became the superintendent of the main Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha and all the branch *maṭhas*, and managed them all with great expertise. Furthermore, after Śrīla Prabhupāda's disappearance from this world, Vinoda-bihārī established the Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti with Gauḍīya Maṭhas and preaching centres throughout India and around the world and thus preached *śuddha-bhakti* everywhere.

Receiving Śrīla Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja's darśana and his blessings

In those days, Śrīla Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja was renowned throughout Vraja-maṇḍala, Gauḍa-maṇḍala and Kṣetra-maṇḍala as a *siddha bābājī*. He had appeared in a village in East Bengal. After his wife died, he left family life and went to Śrī Dhāma Vṛndāvana to perform *bhagavad-bhajana*. There, at Sūrya-kuṇḍa, he began to perform *sādhana-bhajana* adopting strict renunciation, and would hear *hari-kathā* in the association of *vaiṣṇava-sārvabhauma* Śrī Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja, a disciple of Śrī Madhusūdana dāsa Bābājī. Śrīla Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja's renunciation was so severe that from time to time, when he felt hungry, he would eat mud from Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa or the Yamunā. As a result, he became blind. Like the six Gosvāmīs, he would reside in one place for only a few days – Rādhā-kuṇḍa, Śrī Dhāma Vṛndāvana, Varsānā, Nandagrāma, Bhāṇḍīravana or any of the other places associated with Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. He lamented intensely in feelings of great separation from Śrīmatī Rādhikā and would sing in a loud voice:



Śrīla Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja

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koṭhāya go premamayi rādhe rādhe
rādhe rādhe go, jaya rādhe rādhe

Where is She who is full of *prema*? All glories to Śrī Rādhā.

dekhā diya prāṇa rākha rādhe rādhe
tomāra kāṅgāla tomāya ḍāke rādhe rādhe

O Rādhā, please give me Your *darśana* and save my life. Your wretched beggar calls out to You, "Rādhe! Rādhe!"

rādhe vṛndāvana-vilāsinī rādhe rādhe
rādhe kānu-manomohinī rādhe rādhe

O Rādhā, You enjoy pleasure pastimes in the forest of Vṛndāvana, wherein You enchant the mind of Kṛṣṇa.

rādhe aṣṭa-sakhīra śiromaṇi rādhe rādhe
rādhe vṛṣabhānu-nandini rādhe rādhe

O Rādhā, You are the crest jewel among Your eight principal *sakhīs*. O Rādhā, daughter of Vṛṣabhānu Bābā.

(gosāī) niyama ka're sadāi ḍāke, rādhe rādhe

Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī always calls out, "Rādhe! Rādhe!"

(gosāī) ekabāra ḍāke keśī-ghāṭe,
ābāra ḍāke vaṁśī-vaṭe, rādhe rādhe

...sometimes at Keśī-ghāṭa, sometimes at Vaṁśī-vaṭa

(gosāī) ekabāra ḍāke nidhuvane,
ābāra ḍāke kuñjavane, rādhe rādhe

...sometimes in Nidhuvana, sometimes in Sevā-kuñja

(gosāī) ekabāra ḍāke rādhā-kuṇḍe,
ābāra ḍāke śyāma-kuṇḍe, rādhe rādhe

...sometimes at Rādhā-kuṇḍa, sometimes at Śyāma-kuṇḍa

(gosāī) ekbāra ḍāke kusumavane,
ābāra ḍāke govardhane, rādhe rādhe

...sometimes at Kusuma-sarovara, sometimes at Girirāja Govardhana

(gosāī) ekabāra ḍāke tālavane,
ābāra ḍāke tamālavane, rādhe rādhe

...sometimes in Tālavana, sometimes in Tamālvana.

(gosāī) malina vasana diye gāya,
vrajera dhūlāya gaḍāgaḍi jāya, rādhe rādhe

Raghunātha dāsa wears simple cloth that appears to be dirty because he is always rolling on the earth crying out, "Rādhe! Rādhe!"

(gosāī) mukhe rādhā rādhā bale,
bhāse nayanera jale, rādhe rādhe

Calling out "Rādhe! Rādhe!" his eyes burst with a flood of tears.

(gosāī) vṛndāvane kuli kuli keṅde beḍāya
rādhā bali', rādhe rādhe

He wanders throughout the lanes of Vṛndāvana crying out, "Rādhe! Rādhe!"

(gosāī) chāpānna daṇḍa rātri-dine,
jāne nā rādhā-govinda bine, rādhe rādhe

He knows nothing but Rādhā-Govinda throughout the day and night [*chāpānna daṇḍa* equals 56 *daṇḍas*; 1 *daṇḍa* equals 24 minutes]. "Rādhe! Rādhe!"

tārapara cāri daṇḍa śuti' thāke
svapne rādhā-govinda dekhe, rādhe rādhe

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He takes rest for only four *daṇḍas* [1 hr. 36 min.]. In his dreams he receives *darśana* of Rādhā-Govinda. "Rādhe! Rādhe!"

When he could no longer tolerate the separation from his worshipful deity, Śrīmatī Rādhikā, he left Śrī Dhāma Vṛndāvana for Śrī Dhāma Navadvīpa.

According to our Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas*, it is possible to commit *aparādha* (offences) against Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Śrī Kṛṣṇa's name and Śrī Kṛṣṇa's abode. Without being free from *aparādha*, one cannot have the genuine mercy of these three and obtain *vraja-prema*, pure love of God in the mood of the inhabitants of Vraja. However, Śrī Gaura, Śrī Gaura's name and Śrī Gaura's abode are causelessly merciful, and do not consider any offence. With intense eagerness, one can easily obtain *vraja-prema* by chanting the names of Śrī Gaura-Nityānanda in Gaura-dhāma. *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Ādi-līlā* 8.24, 16, 31) states:

'kṛṣṇa-nāma' kare aparādhera vicāra
kṛṣṇa balile aparādhīra nā haya vikāra

One must consider the effect of offences while chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*. It is because of these offences that one does not become ecstatic while chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa.

bahu janma kare yadi śravaṇa, kīrtana
tabhu ta' nā pāya kṛṣṇa-pade prema-dhana

If one is infested with the ten offences in the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*, despite his endeavour to chant the holy name for many births, he will not get the love of Godhead that is the ultimate goal of this chanting. *

caitanya-nityānande nāhi esaba vicāra
nāma laite prema dena, bahe aśrudhāra

But if one only chants with some slight faith the holy names of Lord Caitanya and Nityānanda, very quickly he is cleansed of all offenses. Thus as soon as he chants the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*, he feels the ecstasy of love for God. *

For this very reason, Śrī Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja and other eminent Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *mahājanas* came from Vṛndāvana and performed *bhajana* in Śrī Gauḍa-bhūmi. Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura confirms this *siddhānta* in his song *Gaurāṅgera Duṭī-pada*:

śrī-gauḍa-maṇḍala-bhūmi, jebā jāne cintāmaṇi,
tā'ra haya vraja-bhūme vāsa
gaura prema rasārṇave, se taraṅge jebā ḍūbe,
se rādhā-mādhava-antaraṅga

Those people who recognize the land of Śrī Gauḍa-maṇḍala as *cintāmaṇi*, or spiritual touchstone, and who reside there with great faith, quickly obtain residence in Vraja-bhūmi. Those who are immersed in the great ocean of love of Śacīnandana Śrī Gaurahari obtain the loving service of the lotus feet of *akhila-rasāmṛta-mūrti* Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, who are the embodiment of all nectarean mellows, in Śrī Vṛndāvana. This is the supreme secret.

Considering these conclusions, Śrī Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja began to perform *bhajana* in the town of Kuliyā (presently known as Navadvīpa town). Bābājī Mahārāja's renunciation was of an extremely high standard, similar to that of Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī. Eminent *mahātmās* and *bhajanānandīs* understood that their lives became successful simply by having his *darśana*. *Jagad-guru nitya-līlā-praviṣṭa* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda chose this

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Śrīla Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja's *bhajana-kuṭī* in Śrī Godrumadvīpa

> "Eminent *mahātmās* and *bhajanānandīs* understood that their lives became successful simply by having his *darśana*. *Jagad-guru nitya-līlā-praviṣṭa* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda chose this *mahāpuruṣa* as his *guru*."

mahāpuruṣa as his *guru*. Like Śrīla Lokanātha Gosvāmī, Bābājī Mahārāja was fully immersed in the divine rapture of *bhajana*. By this absorption, he was able to distance himself from worldly entanglements, non-devotional materialists and religious hypocrites. Like the six Gosvāmīs, he spent twenty-four hours a day immersed in *bhajana* and, like them, he effortlessly maintained his life by *madhukarī-bhikṣā*, begging from householders to obtain just enough to survive.

It must be remembered that at that time, Śrī Dhāma Māyāpura, the appearance place of Śrī Gaura, had not yet been completely developed. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was performing *bhajana* in a mood of deep separation, residing in a *bhajana-kuṭī* on the bank of the Gaṅgā in Śrī Godrumadvīpa, not far from Śrī Dhāma Māyāpura. Śrī Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja often crossed the Gaṅgā from the town of Kuliyā to meet with Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, who was known as the Seventh Gosvāmī. They would always discuss the magnanimous and sweet pastimes of Śrī Gaurasundara and Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.

On one occasion, Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja, weary of materialistic people, locked himself in the latrine of a public *dharmaśālā* (rest-house) in Kuliyā and began to perform *bhajana*. He found this stinking place conducive for *bhajana*, as he preferred the stench of the toilet to the bad association of materialists. People wondered where Bābājī had gone. After two or three days, the sweeper-woman arrived. As she was cleaning the stool underneath the latrine, she heard a tender voice filled with intense longing, chanting, "Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare, Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare." Glancing upwards, she was astonished to see Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja fully absorbed in chanting *harināma*. He was not aware of his body or of the bad smell.

The sweeper-woman immediately told the chairman of the municipality, and the news soon reached the ears of the district authorities,

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the police superintendent and others. Everyone came to Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja and repeatedly requested him to open the door of the latrine and come out. "Bābājī Mahārāja," they pleaded, "we have arranged a *bhajana-kuṭīra* for you on the banks of Bhagavatī Gaṅgā. Please stay there and perform *bhajana*." But Bābājī Mahārāja did not pay any attention to their talk and went on with his ceaseless chanting of the holy names. To the incessant requests of the high officials, Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja only replied in a feeble voice, "I am ill and not able to open the door." The defeated officials finally left.

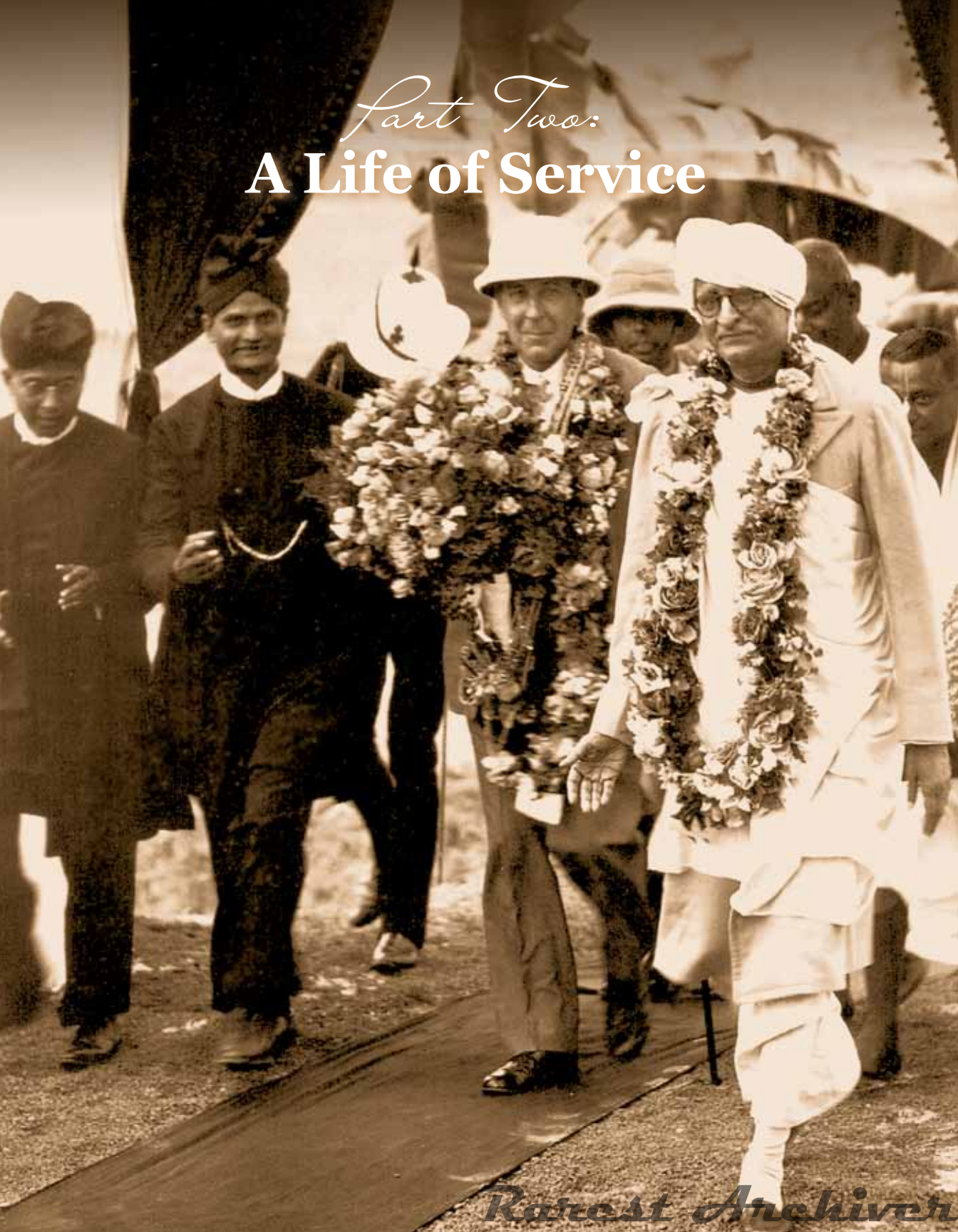
A short time later, on Śrīla Prabhupāda's instructions, Śrī Vinoda-bihārī Brahmacārī came from Māyāpura with Sarojinī-devī, Priyatamā-devī and Śrī Gaura-govinda Vidyābhūṣaṇa (later, *tridaṇḍi-svāmī* Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Vilāsa Gabhastinemi Mahārāja) to have the *darśana* of Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja. However, despite their repeated requests, Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja still gave the same excuse and would not open the door. Śrī Gaura-govinda Prabhu then said in a very humble voice, "Bābājī Mahārāja, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura mercifully accepted us as his disciples. We have come here on his instruction in the great hope of having your *darśana*. We will be very disheartened if we cannot obtain it." When he heard this, Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja became happy and replied with great affection, "You are the object of Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's grace. Come in." Then he quickly opened the door.

They saw that he was completely absorbed in chanting his *harināma* on a *mālā* made of a knotted cloth. Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja observed Śrī Vinoda-bihārī Brahmacārī's extremely beautiful youthful form, his sincere desire to perform *bhajana*, his sprouting *yukta-vairāgya* (appropriate renunciation), and above all his firm faith in his spiritual master (*guru-niṣṭhā*). Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja blessed him, saying, "I have taken away all disasters and obstacles from your life. Fearlessly you should perform *bhajana* and spread the words of Śrīman Mahāprabhu all over the world." Hearing this blessing, Śrī Vinoda-bihārī's eyes overflowed with tears. Falling at Bābājī Mahārāja's lotus feet, he took his foot-dust on his head. After hearing *hari-kathā* for some time and worshipping Bābājī Mahārāja's lotus feet, they departed for Śrī Māyāpura.

"I have taken away all disasters and obstacles from your life. Fearlessly you should perform *bhajana* and spread the words of Śrīman Mahāprabhu all over the world."

Years later, when Śrīla Gurupāda-padma told us about Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja's blessing, he became restless like a child and started to cry, saying, "By the causeless mercy of Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja, we are today fearlessly preaching *śuddha-bhakti* throughout the world. In the course of our preaching, we have met with great hardship and countless obstacles, and even our lives have been endangered. But by the mercy of Śrīla Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja, our strength never diminished, and the clouds of hardship were quickly dispelled."

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Part Two:
A Life of Service

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Leaving home

After Śrī Vinoda-bihārī Brahmacārī received *harināma* initiation from Śrīla Prabhupāda, he returned home and began regular studies at Daulatpura College. From time to time, however, he went to Śrī Dhāma Māyāpura to Śrīla Prabhupāda's lotus feet, where he listened to Śrīla Prabhupāda's powerful *hari-kathā* with faith and full concentration.

In those days, the college syllabus included a study of *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. The teacher would try to explain the Bengali and Sanskrit verses of *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* in class, but he could not really fathom the text, with its difficult philosophical points and elevated devotional sentiments. Although Śrī Vinoda-bihārī was just a student, he understood the profound and complicated philosophical ideas and high devotional sentiments of *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* and readily explained them so that others could also understand. His erudition fascinated the other students as well as his teacher.

One day while studying *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, they were discussing *sanātana-śikṣā*, the teachings of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu to Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī, and read the verse:

kṛṣṇera svarūpa-vicāra
śuna, sanātana
advaya-jñāna-tattva,
vraje vrajendra-nandana

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (*Madhya-līlā* 20.152)

O Sanātana, please hear about Śrī Kṛṣṇa's *svarūpa*, His intrinsic form. He is the non-dual Absolute Truth, ever existent in Vṛndāvana as Nanda Mahārāja's son.

The teacher explained this verse according to *kevalādvaita-vāda*. This theory of oneness states that the Supreme Truth (*parama-tattva*) is the impersonal, undifferentiated aspect of the Absolute (*brahma-tattva*). This *brahma-tattva* is the personification of knowledge (*jñāna-svarūpa*); without variety (*nirviśeṣa*); beyond the spell of illusion (*nirañjana*); without power (*niḥśaktik*); without attributes or qualities (*nirguṇa*); and without form (*nirākāra*). This is ultimate reality; there is nothing beyond this.

He went on to say that *parama-tattva* is seen in the form of Īśvara, or Bhagavān, the Supreme Lord endowed with personal attributes, only due to the influence of indescribable *māyā*. The living being is also *brahma* but understands itself to be a separate entity due to being covered by ignorance. The *jīva* can only unite with *brahma* or become *brahma*, when it removes itself from ignorance and illusion. *Yogīs* perceive this *advaya-jñāna nirviśeṣa-vastu* (the supreme non-dual, non-variegated substance) as Īśvara or Paramātmā, the Supersoul. *Bhakti-yogīs* see it as Bhagavān, the Supreme Person who is endowed with all attributes. *Brahma* is that Truth which is

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devoid of any material qualities (*nirupādhika-tattva*), but Paramātmā and Vrajendra-nandana Bhagavān is the Truth endowed with all transcendental qualities (*sopādhika-tattva*). All three are within *advaya-jñāna*.

When Śrī Vinoda-bihārī heard his teacher's interpretation of this verse, he firmly contradicted it with a sharp rebuttal. He explained that this understanding is completely imaginary and contradictory to the teachings of *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, the spotless Purāṇa *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *Vedānta-sūtra*. He then gave the following beautiful explanation of the verse in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, with evidence from the Vedas, Upaniṣads and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

Śrī Vinoda-bihārī explained that Śrī Caturmukha Brahmā, Nārada, Śāṇḍilya, Parāśara, Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vedavyāsa and other great sages are *tattva-darśī* – they have seen the Absolute Truth. They have explained that there is only one *tattva*, or Truth, and that is *advaya-jñāna para-tattva*, the non-dual Absolute Truth. Although it is non-dual, it is realized in three apparently different aspects. Dry *jñānīs* (empiric philosophers) use the process of *nirviśeṣa-jñāna*, or impersonal knowledge, to understand the Absolute Truth as the impersonal, featureless Absolute (*nirviśeṣa-brahma*). *Yogīs* realize it as the Supersoul within the heart (Paramātmā), and pure devotees, by their practice of *bhakti-yoga*, realize that same *para-tattva* as Vrajendra-nandana Bhagavān. So the non-dual Absolute is realized first as *brahma*, secondly as Paramātmā and finally as Bhagavān.

He continued explaining that the meaning of *advaya-jñāna*, or non-dual reality, is that this Absolute Truth possesses an inconceivable potency (*acintya-śakti*) by which the impossible is made possible (*aghaṭana-ghaṭana-paṭīyasī*). The supreme, transcendental potency of the Absolute Truth is manifest in three aspects: the spiritual, internal potency (*cit-śakti*), the marginal potency (*jīva-śakti*) and the external potency (*māyā-śakti*). The *cit-śakti*, by the desire of *para-tattva* Śrī Kṛṣṇa, manifests Vaikuṇṭha, Goloka Vṛndāvana, the other spiritual abodes and everything within them. The *jīva-śakti* manifests innumerable living entities, and *māyā-śakti* manifests millions upon millions of material universes. The living entity, being manifested by *jīva-śakti*, has minute consciousness and can be covered by *māyā*. *Śakti* (the potency) and its transformations, the living entities and the material world, all have an eternal relationship with the possessor of potency (*śaktimān*). This relationship is inconceivably non-different and different (*acintya-bhedābheda*). That is to say, potency, the living entities and matter are simultaneously and inconceivably one with and different from the Supreme Absolute Truth, Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is the source of all energies. Without Him, neither the living entity nor the creation can exist. Thus, Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa is called *advaya-jñāna para-tattva*, the non-dual Absolute Truth.

This Absolute Truth is not formless, powerless, without qualities and so on. Devotees anoint their eyes of devotion with the salve of *prema* and take *darśana* of *advaya-jñāna para-tattva* in the form of Vrajendra-nandana. The varietyless, characterless, formless *brahma* which the dry impersonal *jñānīs* perceive is only the bodily lustre of Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa. According to *Bhagavad-gītā* (14.27), the impersonal, undifferentiated aspect of the Absolute (which is the *brahma-tattva* of the impersonalists) is not itself the ultimate truth because it is dependent on Svayam Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa:

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brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhāham
amṛtasyāvyayasya ca
śāśvatasya ca dharmasya
sukhasyaikāntikasya ca

In My form as *nirguṇa-saviśeṣa-tattva*, I have no material characteristics, but I am full of spiritual attributes, and I am indeed the shelter of *brahma*, which is the ultimate goal of the *jñānīs*. My *svarūpa* in the form of *nirguṇa-saviśeṣa-tattva* is the support of immortality, imperishability, eternality, *prema* (love of God, which is the *nitya-dharma*, or eternal function, of the *jīvas*) and *vraja-rasa*, the form of complete happiness.

Śrī Vinoda-bihārī elaborated with further scriptural references:

yasya prabhā prabhavato jagad-aṇḍa-koṭi-
koṭīṣv aśeṣa-vasudhādi vibhūti-bhinnam
tad brahma niṣkalam anantam aśeṣa-bhūtaṁ
govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi

Brahma-saṁhitā (5.40)

I worship the original Personality, Śrī Govinda. The non-differentiated, impersonal *brahma* that has been described by the Upaniṣads has originated from the radiance of His limbs. That effulgence is distinct from the majestic opulence of billions of worlds, such as the Earth planet, which comprise the mundane realm, and is perceived as the indivisible, unlimited, endless principle of truth.

It is important to note that when the scriptures mention *parama-brahma* – the word *brahma* modified with the adjective *parama*, supreme – they are talking about Svayam Bhagavān Vrajendra-nandana. Therefore, *parama-brahma* Svayam Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa is superior to *brahma*. He is *sarva-śaktimān*, the possessor of all potencies, and *akhila-rasāmṛta-mūrti*, the personification of all nectarean mellows. This *parama-brahma* Śrī Kṛṣṇa – together with all His eternal associates, all the living entities and the material realms – is accepted as the non-dual Supreme Absolute Truth (*advaya-jñāna para-tattva*).

The *śakti* of Bhagavān is described in the Vedas: "*parāsya śaktir vividhaiva śrūyate svābhāvikī jñāna-bala-kriyā ca* – the *parā-śakti*, superior energy, is perceivable in different forms" (*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 6.8).

And in *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* (6.7.61):

viṣṇu-śaktiḥ parā proktā
kṣetra-jñākhyā tathā parā
avidyā-karma-saṁjñānyā
tṛtīyā śaktir iṣyate

Viṣṇu-śakti is of three kinds – *parā* (transcendental), *kṣetrajñā* (the living entity) and *avidyā* (nescience). Viṣṇu's *parā-śakti* is called *cit-śakti*, *kṣetrajñā* is called *jīva-śakti*, and *avidyā* is *māyā-śakti*.

This is also confirmed in the Vedānta: "*śakti-śaktimator abhedaḥ* – there is no difference between the potency (*śakti*) and the possessor of the potency (*śaktimān*)."

In this way, Śrī Vinoda-bihārī established that Vrajendra-nandana Śyāmasundara is both the ultimate and direct manifest form of the *advaya-jñāna para-tattva*.

On another occasion, the teacher chose the following verse from *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Madhya-līlā* 20.108) for the class discussion:

jīvera 'svarūpa' haya—
kṛṣṇera 'nitya-dāsa'
kṛṣṇera 'taṭasthā-śakti',
'bhedābheda-prakāśa'

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> The living entity's constitutional position is as an eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa. As a manifestation of Kṛṣṇa's marginal energy he is simultaneously one with Kṛṣṇa and different from Him.

This time, too, the teacher's explanation was contrary to the scriptures. The teacher said that the *jīva* is actually *brahma*; *brahma* only appears to be the *jīva*, as a rope falsely appears to be a snake or as an oyster shell appears to be ivory. He did not accept that the living entities are the *śakti* of *brahma* or that the living entities and the material world are transformation of *śakti*.

Śrī Vinoda-bihārī Brahmacārī used simple examples to explain that it is the nature of the *jīva* to be an eternal servant of Bhagavān, the Supreme Lord. According to *Bhagavad-gītā* (15.7): *"mamaivāṁśo jīva-loke jīva-bhūtaḥ sanātanaḥ* – the *jīva* is a transformation of the marginal potency (*taṭasthā-śakti*) of *sarva-śaktimān para-brahma*, the Supreme Lord who possesses all potencies."

Although one cannot find perfect examples in this world to describe transcendental matters, Śrī Vinoda-bihārī used two analogies to explain the nature of the *jīva*: the relation of the sun's rays to the sun and the connection of sparks to a blazing fire. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is like the sun, and the shimmering particles of light in the sun rays can be compared to the infinitesimal *jīvas*. Just as Śrī Kṛṣṇa is complete *cit-tattva*, transcendental reality, so the *jīvas* are minute *cit-tattva*. Bhagavān is the master of *māyā* and all other potencies (*śaktis*), and the *jīvas* can come under the control of *māyā*. Bhagavān is the basis of all transcendental qualities; He is the actual doer, the enjoyer and the transcendental ego, and He possesses these qualities in full, whereas the *jīva* only possesses them to a minute degree. The constitution (*dharma*) of the *jīva* is complete because he has a natural relationship with Kṛṣṇa. Hence, even in the *jīva* the idea of being the doer, the enjoyer and so forth are eternally innate. Because the *jīva* has forgotten Bhagavān, however, *māyā* covers his pure nature with a subtle and a gross material body. It is only by the causeless mercy of a pure transcendental *guru* or of Bhagavān Himself that the *jīva* can adopt the process of *bhakti-yoga* and thus re-establish himself in his true spiritual form (*svarūpa*).

The other example is that of a blazing fire and its sparks. Innumerable, minute conscious *jīvas* manifest from the *taṭasthā-śakti* (marginal potency) like uncountable sparks emanating from a blazing fire. *Taṭasthā-śakti* is also known as *jīva-śakti*. Although the *jīvas* by nature are conscious, they are minute and therefore can be covered by the deluding material energy, *māyā-śakti*. Because of their marginal nature, the *jīvas* are qualified to go either to the spiritual world (Vaikuṇṭha) or to the material world. When they gain the strength of the spiritual potency, they can serve Bhagavān in Vaikuṇṭha. Conversely, when they are opposed to Bhagavān, they wander within the illusory material world. This is the profound purport of this verse. Hearing Śrī Vinoda-bihārī's explanation, which was based on *bhakti*, everyone in his class was struck with wonder.

One day Śrī Vinoda-bihārī became absorbed in contemplating the verses of *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. He reflected that this human form of life is extremely rare. Only human beings can obtain *bhagavat-tattva*, knowledge of the Absolute Truth; it is not possible in other forms of life, such as birds, animals or trees.

It is by the mercy of the Supreme Lord that one is fortunate to attain a human body, but there

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is no certainty when death will come. For this reason, before death comes, it is advisable to adopt the process of *bhakti-yoga* to make one's life successful. There is no need for an atheistic education. Having received exclusive shelter at the lotus feet of the supremely merciful and omniscient *śrī gurudeva* – Śrīla Prabhupāda – one's supreme duty is to perform *hari-bhajana*.

Thinking like this, Śrī Vinoda-bihārī left college without taking his final exam, even though he had paid the examination fee. In 1919, he came to the lotus feet of Śrī Guru, leaving the loving ties of his affectionate mother and completely giving up everything related to land and home.

His affectionate mother wept and said, "I knew that we would not be able to keep Jonā at home. My heart trembled with fear at the astounding incidents in his life. He was no ordinary child. Seeing Jonā's astounding courage, his dedication to truth and his altruism, I could easily imagine his future. Of all my sons, I loved him the most. No one can understand how much I loved him. When I watched his supra-mundane behaviour and character, and saw his companions, I always feared he would renounce the material world and become a *sannyāsī*. Whatever he did was good, but I cannot stay alive without seeing him." As she spoke, she became beside herself with grief.

Receiving dīkṣā and guru-mantra

Giving up the illusory affection of his mother and family, he arrived at Śrī Gurudeva's lotus feet in Śrī Dhāma Māyāpura. Śrīla Prabhupāda was extremely pleased upon seeing his firm resolve to perform *hari-bhajana*. At that time, Śrī Gaura-janmotsava (the appearance of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu) was approaching and the arrangements for the huge Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma *parikramā* were under way. Śrīla Prabhupāda appointed his dear servant to be responsible for various arrangements for the Śrī Dhāma *parikramā*.

The word 'Navadvīpa' means 'nine islands'. Bhagavatī Bhāgīrathī (Gaṅgā) flows in a zigzag course through Śrīman Mahāprabhu's *dhāma*, as if she does not want to leave the *dhāma* to continue on her way. For this reason, Navadvīpa is divided into nine parts. Antardvīpa Māyāpura is situated in the middle of these islands on the east bank of the *patita-pāvanī* Gaṅgā. Here Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa appeared as Śacīnandana Gaurahari, accepting the inner moods and bodily lustre of Śrīmatī Rādhikā. Here, also, Śrī Gaurahari performed His transcendental childhood and adolescent pastimes until He was twenty-four.



Śrīla Prabhupāda

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Śrī Dhāma Māyāpura lies in the middle of eight other islands with Sīmantadvīpa, Godrumadvīpa and Madhyadvīpa on the eastern side of the Gaṅgā, and Koladvīpa, Ṛtudvīpa, Jahnudvīpa, Modadrumadvīpa and Rudradvīpa on the western side. Due to the Gaṅgā's meandering flow, part of Śrī Rudradvīpa is presently situated on her western bank and part on her eastern bank.

After Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's disappearance, Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu, who is non-different from Śrī Baladeva, took Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī on *parikramā* of these nine islands. Some time later, Īśāna Ṭhākura led Śrīnivāsa Ācārya on Śrī Dhāma *parikramā*. Since then, Gaurasundara's dear devotees have been performing *dhāma-parikramā* with great faith. In *Bhakti-ratnākara*, Śrī Narahari Sarkāra Ṭhākura has described the *parikramā* in detail. However, for various reasons, in the course of time, the performance of Gaura-dhāma *parikramā* was discontinued. By the influence of *māyā*, even the birthplace of Śrī Gaura, Māyāpura-dhāma, became covered under the rule of the Muslims, who changed the name of Māyāpura to Miyāṁpur and destroyed all memories of the *dhāma*.



Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura (right)

It was the Seventh Gosvāmī, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, who rediscovered Māyāpura-dhāma. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda composed *Navadvīpa-dhāma-māhātmya* and *Navadvīpa-bhāva-taraṅga*, poetic works glorifying the land of Navadvīpa. In addition, he acquired the landlordship of Śrīman Mahāprabhu's birthplace and in a small, straw-thatched temple established deities of Gaura-Viṣṇupriyā, Śacī-Jagannātha-Nimāī and Pañca-tattva. Thereafter, he entrusted the whole



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responsibility of this undertaking to *jagad-guru* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī. From that time, Śrīla Prabhupāda started *dhāma-parikramā* again under Śrīla Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda's guidance. Since then, Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma *parikramā* has been performed annually with great pomp and celebration.

That same year, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda gave *dīkṣā* initiation to Vinoda-bihārī at Yogapīṭha on Śrī Gaura-pūrṇimā evening after the completion of the *parikramā*. After the *dīkṣā* ceremony was over, Vinoda-bihārī went to his *guru*, and at his lotus feet, humbly requested the *guru-mantra*. Until then Śrīla Prabhupāda had not given the *guru-mantra* to anyone. When Śrīla Prabhupāda heard Vinoda-bihārī's earnest request, he became silent and began to reflect. Seeing him silent, the *brahmacārī* again expressed his ardent desire: "Must a disciple approach some other *guru* to receive the *guru-mantra* and instructions on service to *guru*?" Hearing this, Śrīla Prabhupāda smiled, and with great affection gave Vinoda-bihārī the *guru-mantra*. After this, Śrīla Prabhupāda started to give the *guru-mantra* to others as well.

Śrīla Prabhupāda had a transcendental rule that when a disciple or anyone offered him *praṇāma*, he would return the greetings by

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folding his hands and saying, "*Dāso 'smi* – I am your servant." Seeing such humble behaviour on the part of his *gurudeva*, Śrī Vinoda-bihārī Brahmacārī always hid while offering him *praṇāma*. Śrīla Prabhupāda had another transcendental practice: he always addressed his disciples and others using the honorific title for 'you' [which in Bengali is *apni*]. But because he was so satisfied with Śrī Vinoda-bihārī's intimate service he would use *tumi* [the most intimate way of saying 'you' in Bengali] and other loving words to address him. There were few among Prabhupāda's disciples who received such fortune.

Ideal maṭha life



In the house of his *guru*, Śrī Vinoda-bihārī became absorbed in *sādhana-bhajana*, in studying devotional literature, and in his service in the *maṭha*. Even though he was from an educated, respected, upper class family, he was completely devoid of pride. His life was an example of the same strict renunciation that was practised by Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī. For the service of Hari, Guru and Vaiṣṇavas he performed even the most insignificant tasks in the *maṭha* with great enthusiasm. In *bhakti-sādhana*, it is absolutely essential to perform all endeavours for the pleasure of Kṛṣṇa and to give up all enjoyment for His satisfaction. His life perfectly illustrates these two considerations.

In the early days of the Śrī Caitanya Maṭha, the *maṭha* residents were performing *sādhana-bhajana*, but due to lack of funds, they were sustaining themselves with great difficulty. At that time Śrī Vinoda-bihārī was the manager

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of the *maṭha*. One day, there were only two hundred grams of rice in the *maṭha*, so they cooked all the rice, prepared leaves from the drumstick tree and offered these to Ṭhākurajī. There were four *brahmacārīs* at the time. After the offering, the four performed *prasāda-sevā*. Śrīla Prabhupāda was present there and saw that the *prasāda* his disciples were honouring consisted of a large amount of *sāg* (green leaves) with only a handful of rice. Furthermore, there were not even leaf-plates from which to eat. Seeing this, Prabhupāda became very unhappy and asked, "Is there no rice in the storeroom?" To avoid giving their spiritual master any anxiety, they humbly answered, "Gurudeva, we are just learning renunciation." Prabhupāda, however, understood everything.

When Śrī Vinoda-bihārī accepted *prasāda*, he would never comment on whether the vegetables or *dāl* had too much or too little salt, or if it was tasty or not. He performed his *prasāda-sevā* with great faith and affection, knowing that *mahā-prasāda* is non-different from the Lord Himself. While honouring *prasāda*, he never engaged in useless conversation and never criticized anyone or took part in any other discussion. Seeing this exemplary Vaiṣṇava behaviour, all the *maṭha* residents revered him.

By the order of Śrī Gurudeva, Śrī Vinoda-bihārī defends the property of his previous āśrama

After Vinoda-bihārī left home, the estate of his former household became unstable. His mother's health began to fail due to separation from her dear son, and the condition of the property also deteriorated because Vinoda was not there to manage things. Śrīla Prabhupāda mercifully sent Vinoda-bihārī to his previous home for some time to sort out the problems. News of his coming home spread everywhere. With great expertise he pacified the tenants who were uprising and soon everyone began to pay rent regularly as before. After everything was settled, he took his mother's permission and returned to his *guru's* house.

After some time a letter came from Vinoda's home addressed to Śrīla Prabhupāda. Grief-stricken and longing for her son, his mother desperately wanted to see him in her last days, and she beseeched Prabhupāda to send Vinoda to her quickly. Upon reading the letter, Śrīla Prabhupāda called for Vinoda-bihārī and ordered him to go. After hearing Śrīla Prabhupāda's instruction, Vinoda returned to his *bhajana-kuṭīra* and did not come out for the whole day. The next day Śrīla Prabhupāda summoned a *brahmacārī* and asked, "I told Vinoda-bihārī to go to his home. Did he go or not? I have not seen him."

The *brahmacārī* answered, "Vinoda-bihārī has so far not left. He is staying in his *bhajana-kuṭīra* chanting *harināma*."

Śrīla Prabhupāda then called for Vinoda-bihārī and asked, "I told you to go to your home. You haven't left yet?"

Vinoda-bihārī answered, "Prabhu, I have not gone home."

"Why not?" Prabhupāda demanded.

Vinoda-bihārī humbly replied, "My mother loves me so much, and that is why I have not gone. If on her deathbed she tells me, 'My son, this is my last instruction: return home and take care of the household,' how can I disobey her last request? But if I were to do so, then my human

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birth would become unsuccessful. My *guru-sevā*, my hearing *hari-kathā* and my *sādhana-bhajana* would all be ruined. *Hari-bhajana* is the ultimate duty in life, which is only possible in human life. You have said that human birth is rare. Moreover, to meet a *sad-guru* like you in any human birth is extremely rare: '*sakala janme mātā-pītā sabe pāya / kṛṣṇa guru nāhi mile, bhajaha hiyāya.*'

"You have also said that a person who is engaged in *sevā* to *guru* and Bhagavān Mukunda is not indebted to his parents, ancestors, demigods or others. He is freed from all kinds of debts."

Śrīla Prabhupāda's eyes filled with tears when he heard this, and he did not say another word. The *brahmacārīs* living in the *maṭha* were amazed at Śrī Vinoda-bihārī's devotion for Śrī Gurudeva and for *bhajana*.

"You have also said that a person who is engaged in *sevā* to *guru* and Bhagavān Mukunda is not indebted to his parents, ancestors, demigods or others. He is freed from all kinds of debts."

Hospitality

From the beginning, the residents of Śrī Caitanya Maṭha had great difficulty maintaining themselves and performing *guru-sevā*, *bhagavat-sevā* and all the other services required in the *maṭha*. Now and then they were subsisting only on *sāg-sabjī*, wild greens. In those days it was common to sleep on the ground and to honour *prasāda* on leaves instead of metal plates. Sometimes they did not even have leaves and had to perform *prasāda-sevā* with great faith right on the cement floor. Still, in the face of these difficulties, the *maṭha* residents remained content in their devotion to *bhajana* and *sevā*.

One day at noon, in Jyeṣṭhā (May–June), the hottest month of the year, two guests, Atula-candra Bandopādhyāya and Atula-kṛṣṇa Datta, came to have *darśana* of Māyāpura-dhāma. Both were highly placed officials in the Indian Railway. As they walked in, Vinoda-bihārī Brahmacārī, the *maṭha* manager, was sitting under a jackfruit tree, overseeing the affairs of the *maṭha* property. Seeing the guests' dry lips, he understood their condition and sent them to a nearby pond to bathe. The *maṭha* residents had already finished their *prasāda-sevā*, but, by the time the two guests returned from their bath, delicious varieties of *mahā-prasāda* were ready and waiting for them. With faith they honoured the *mahā-prasāda*. Being greatly satisfied, they lavishly praised the service mood of the *maṭha* residents.

Śrī Vinoda-bihārī Brahmacārī then took the guests to have *darśana* of Śrīla Prabhupāda. They were deeply impressed by Prabhupāda's powerful *hari-kathā* and expressed a desire to contribute five rupees a month for *maṭha-sevā*. When they returned home, they did not forget their promise and proceeded to send five rupees every month. Gradually, they developed such a desire to hear *hari-kathā* that they began to come to the *maṭha* more and more. After some time, Atula-candra Bandopādhyāya surrendered to Śrīla Prabhupāda, completely renouncing home, wife, sons, family

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Śrīmad Atula-candra Bandopādhyāya after *sannyāsa*
(Śrīmad Bhakti Sāraṅga Gosvāmī Mahārāja)

and all else. This, however, troubled the *maṭha* residents because his monthly donation of five rupees covered most of the *maṭha* expenses. Their budget was that tight. How would they manage now? Atula-candra told them not to worry.

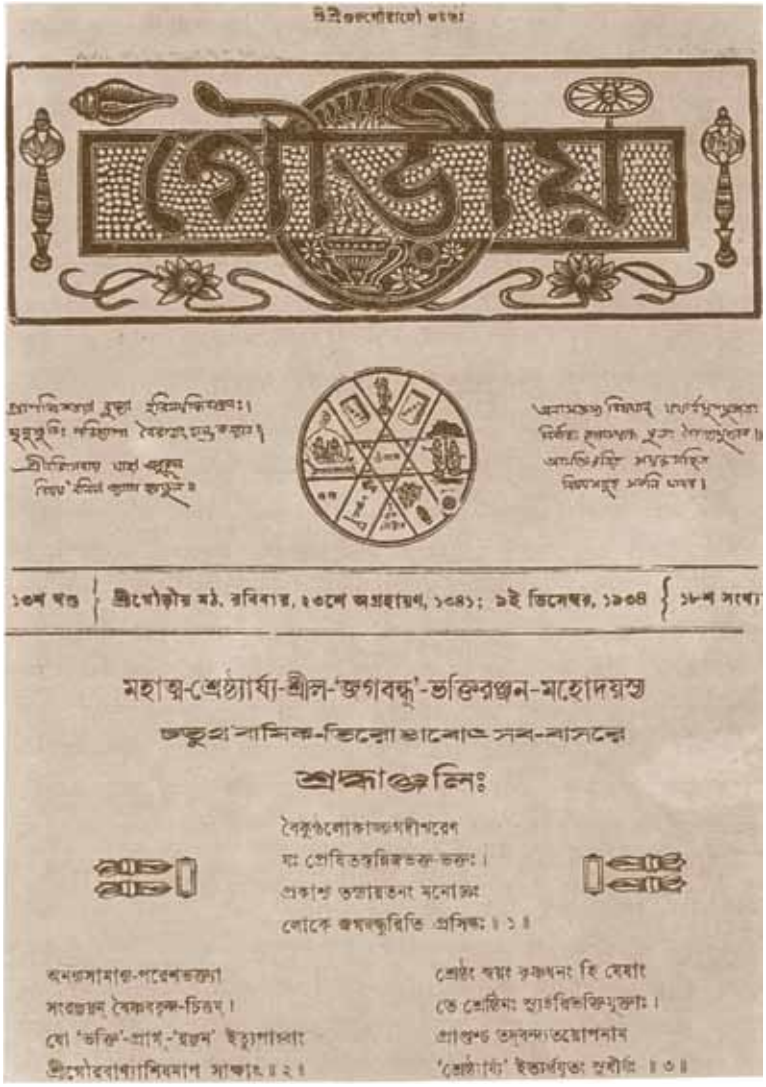
After *harināma-dīkṣā*, Atula-candra became Atula-candra Bandopādhyāya Bhakti Sāraṅga. He began to raise funds among pious, wealthy merchants in Kolkata, Delhi, Mumbai and other major cities. Upon hearing his *hari-kathā*, these people would send truckloads of rice, *dāl*, vegetables and so forth for *maṭha-sevā*. In addition, he established preaching centres and *āśramas* in those cities and was also the editor of the weekly magazine *Gauḍīya*. After Śrīla Prabhupāda's disappearance, he accepted *sannyāsa* and his name became Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Sāraṅga Gosvāmī Mahārāja. Until he disappeared from this world, he had great faith in our most worshipful Gurupāda-padma and considered him his close friend. It was Śrīla Bhakti Sāraṅga Gosvāmī Mahārāja who decorated Śrīla Prabhupāda's intimate, most beloved Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja with the title *pāṣaṇḍa-gajaika-siṁha*. This title compares *paramārādhya* Gurupāda-padma with a lion that tears to pieces the elephant-like false doctrines of *māyāvāda*, *smārta*, *sahajiyā* and other atheistic schools of thought, which are opposed to *bhakti*. He used scriptural proof and irrefutable arguments to destroy the view of anyone who said anything against Śrīla Prabhupāda's presentation of *bhakti*.

The other guest, Atula-kṛṣṇa Dattajī, also gave up his government service and came with his family to Caitanya Maṭha. After receiving *harināma-dīkṣā* from Śrīla Prabhupāda, he began to perform *ekāntīka bhajana* (exclusive worship of the Lord). He compiled *Śrī Gauḍīya-kaṇṭhahāra* (*The Necklace of the Gauḍīya Devotees*). This book contains a collection of verses from the Vedas, Upaniṣads and other *śāstras*, which establish the philosophical conclusions of *śuddha-bhakti*.

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Service to the bṛhad-mṛdaṅga

In April 1913, *jagad-guru* Śrīla Prabhupāda established Bhāgavata Press in Sawnagar Lane in Kālīghāṭa, Kolkata, and began to publish *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Bhagavad-gītā* with the commentary of Śrī Cakravartī Ṭhākura, as well as other scriptures. After Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura entered *nitya-līlā* (eternal pastimes), the press was brought first to Māyāpura and then to Kṛṣṇanagara. There Śrīla Prabhupāda began to publish *Sajjana-toṣaṇī*, the weekly *Gauḍīya* and many other devotional works. Śrīla Prabhupāda observed Śrī Vinoda-bihārī's literary and philosophical inclination, and in 1922 he appointed him manager of the press, as well as printer and publisher of the *Gauḍīya*. Śrī Atula-candra Bandopādhyāya Bhakti Sāraṅga and Śrī Haripada Vidyāratna (MA, BL) were the editors of the magazine, which presented essays and so forth filled with correct *siddhānta*.



An issue of the *Gauḍīya*

Later that year, Śrīla Prabhupāda called for his intimate associate Śrī Vinoda-bihārī Brahmacārī to come to Śrī Dhāma Māyāpura, where he appointed him manager of Caitanya Maṭha. From that time, Śrī Vinoda-bihārī took care of the *maṭha's* various services, especially concentrating on managing the property. Yogapīṭha in Śrī Dhāma Māyāpura and *ākara-maṭha-rāja* Śrī Caitanya Maṭha, the original Gauḍīya Maṭha, began to develop in all respects due to his skilful administration.

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Service to Śrī Dhāma Māyāpura

After the disappearance of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, many places in Māyāpura were relocated to Bhagavatī Gaṅgā's western bank due to the river's changing course. The extensive town of Nadiyā (Navadvīpa), which had previously been on the east bank, now found itself on the high land of Gaṅgā's western bank, and the eastern bank became a deserted, desolate place. Due to the influence of time, during the reign of the Muslims, all the sacred places of the Hindus were destroyed, temples were demolished, and the names of the holy places were changed. The temples at the birthplaces of Śrī Rāma in Ayodhyā and Śrī Kṛṣṇa in Mathurā were razed, and mosques were erected on their foundations. Their names were changed to Phaijābād and Momīnābād. Similarly, the Muslims changed the name of Śrīman Mahāprabhu's birthplace from Māyāpura to Miyāṁpur. Later, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura discovered the birthplace of Śrī Gaura and Jagannātha Miśra-bhavana, again called it Śrī Dhāma Māyāpura. In this way, the name Śrī Dhāma Māyāpura once more became known to the world.

Besides changing the name of Śrī Dhāma Māyāpura, the Muslims had also made a graveyard in the huge courtyard of Candraśekhara-bhavana, which is very close to Jagannātha Miśra-bhavana. Śrī Vinoda-bihārī could not tolerate this atrocity, and as Śrī Caitanya Maṭha's manager he acted fearlessly and boldly. One night he had all the graves dug up and placed elsewhere. On that now vacant land he had large, beautiful trees and foliage planted and transformed it into a beautiful park enclosed by a protective wall. The next morning everyone was astounded at what had taken place. The local Muslims reported it to the police and filed a court case. High-ranking police officers and government officials inspected the place but could find no trace of the graveyard. They saw only an old garden, and as a result they could do nothing. For this pious act the name of Śrī Vinoda-bihārī Brahmacārī will be written in golden letters in the history of India.

Ideal service to the spiritual master

Jagad-guru Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda was a brilliant Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *ācārya*. In a short time he spread Bhagavān's holy name and the flow of pure *bhakti*, as preached and practised by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, over the length and breadth of India, and throughout the whole world as well. Fearlessly, he declared that a *brāhmaṇa* is not a *brāhmaṇa* if he does not worship the complete Spiritual Reality (*brahma*), Śrī Kṛṣṇa. One is not a *jāti-gosvāmī*, temple priest, *gosvāmī* or devotee if he is not performing *bhajana* with body, mind and words like Śrī Rūpa and the other six Gosvāmīs, and if he is not following the *siddhānta* of pure *bhakti*.

Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura preached that the arrangement of society in social orders, or *varṇas*, is based on people's qualities rather than on their family lineage. This is the verdict of the Vedas, Upaniṣads, *Bhagavad-gītā* and other scriptures. The following and other verses offer irrefutable evidence of this conclusion:

(a) "*cātur-varṇyaṁ mayā sṛṣṭaṁ guṇa-karma-vibhāgaśaḥ*... – the fourfold system of social orders was created by Me

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according to divisions of quality (*guṇa*) and work (*karma*)" (*Bhagavad-gītā* 4.13).
(b) "*yasya yal lakṣaṇaṁ proktaṁ puṁso varṇābhivyañjakam…* – a person should be considered to belong to the social order whose characteristics he possesses, even if he has appeared in a different caste" (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.11.35).

People became very attracted by Śrīla Prabhupāda's fearless preaching of the truth. However, so-called *brāhmaṇas* who were devoid of knowledge and civilized behaviour, as well as corrupt caste *gosvāmīs*, became agitated. Unable to counteract his arguments, and having been repeatedly defeated in debates in religious assemblies, they now wanted to kill Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.

In 1925, as in previous years, the sixteen *krośa* Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma *parikramā* was held on the occasion of the appearance of Śrīman Mahāprabhu. Thousands of devoted pilgrims performed *parikramā* in an enormous *saṅkīrtana* party. Śrīla Prabhupāda went on foot in the *parikramā* while the deities of Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga and Gāndharvikā-Giridhārī were borne on the back of an elephant. At one point, the *parikramā* party gathered in front of the temple of Prauḍhāmāyā in Kuliyā (Koladvīpa), and the devotees listened to Śrīla Prabhupāda relating the glories of Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma. Just then, the so-called *brāhmaṇas* and caste *gosvāmīs* of Kuliyā-Navadvīpa attacked them with bricks, stones, hot water, soda bottles and other implements. The outrageous assault caused pandemonium. The pilgrims were running here and there to protect their lives, and no one cared for anyone else. The violent mob was searching for Śrīla Prabhupāda in order to kill him, but Śrī Vinoda-bihārī Brahmacārī immediately took him to a devotee's house nearby for protection. There, Śrī Vinoda-bihārī quickly put on Śrīla Prabhupāda's *sannyāsa* dress and took his *daṇḍa*, giving his own white clothes to Śrīla Prabhupāda to wear. Somehow he sent Śrīla Prabhupāda, undetected, to Śrī Dhāma Māyāpura in this ordinary dress. Meanwhile, the police arrived. Some time later, Śrī Vinoda-bihārī reached Māyāpura safely, still dressed as a *sannyāsī*.

The corrupt police suppressed news of this event, but *Ānanda Bāzār*, at that time a well-known magazine, published an account of the atrocity. The educated and respectable people were shocked to read and hear about this outrage. All the Vaiṣṇavas were amazed at Śrī Vinoda-bihārī Brahmacārī's remarkable *guru-niṣṭhā* (steadfast faith and devotion to the spiritual master), and the incident was discussed everywhere. This is how Śrī Vinoda-bihārī fearlessly counteracted any injustice or atrocity that threatened Śrīla Prabhupāda or challenged his views.

Śrī Vinoda-bihārī's behaviour in this incident calls to mind the *guru-sevā* of Śrī Rāmānujācārya's dear disciple Śrī Kureśa. The Śaivite *sampradāya* dominated South India. When Śrī Rāmānujācārya used scriptural evidence to refute their inaccurate *siddhānta*, evil-minded Śaivaites became inflamed. The wicked Śaivite king invited Śrī Rāmānujācārya to a philosophical debate at Śrī Raṅgam, but this was really a ploy to kill him. Kureśa, who was devoted to his *guru*, heard a rumour of the plot. He exchanged his white clothes with his *gurujī* and arrived in the town escorted by the king's soldiers, wearing Śrī Rāmānujācārya's saffron dress and carrying his *tridaṇḍa*. The king and the people assumed that Kureśa was Rāmānujācārya. Kureśa stood alone against hundreds of learned Śaivites on the other

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“Śrī Vinoda-bihārī Brahmacārī, foremost among the disciples of Śrīla Prabhupāda, later became well-known by the name *oṁ viṣṇupāda* Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja...”

side. A tumultuous debate ensued, in which the Śaivites were defeated.

Nevertheless, in accordance with his plan, the king proclaimed Kureśa's defeat. He removed Kureśa's eyes and then let him go. Kureśa did not utter even a single word. Wandering about, he reached a village far from that kingdom where, by good fortune, Śrī Rāmānujācārya was also present with his disciples. An extraordinary meeting took place between *guru* and disciple. Kureśa, the *guru-sevaka* and disciple, threw himself at his *guru's* lotus feet, and by *śrī guru's* mercy his eyesight was restored. As he lay in the lap of his *gurudeva*, crying out of love, Rāmānuja Ācārya wiped Kureśa's tears with his own outer cloth and with the other hand blessed him to be free from fear. This same Kureśa later became Śrī Rāmānujācārya's famous disciple Kureśācārya. He was a *śruti-dhara* (one who commits something to memory having heard it only once) and an *ācārya* expert in Śrī Rāmānujācārya's philosophical conclusions of *bhakti*.

Similarly, *guru-sevaka* Śrī Vinoda-bihārī Brahmacārī, foremost among the disciples of Śrīla Prabhupāda, later became well-known by the name *oṁ viṣṇupāda* Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja and



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preached the words of Śrī Gaurasundara all over the world, thus fulfilling Śrīla Prabhupāda's innermost desire (*mano-'bhīṣṭa*). For such *guru-sevā*, Śrī Vinoda-bihārī Brahmacārī's name will be written in gold in the annals of the Sārasvata Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas.

Some Vaiṣṇavas say that the incident at Kuliyā was an excuse for Śrīla Prabhupāda to bestow upon his dear disciple the *tridaṇḍa-sannyāsa* dress, even though his formal *sannyāsa* ceremony was held later in Kaṭvā, after Śrīla Prabhupāda's disappearance.

In March 1928, during Śrī Gaura-janmotsava, the 34th yearly session of the Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma Pracāriṇī Sabhā (a devotional assembly) was held, with Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda as the chairman. Selected people were praised in this meeting for their different services in Śrī Maṭha, their preaching of *bhakti* and other tasks. At this meeting, Śrī Vinoda-bihārī Brahmacārī was honoured for protecting the property of Śrīman Mahāprabhu, for the all-round development of Śrī Caitanya Maṭha, for his tireless hard work and endeavour, and for his intimate service in fulfilling Śrīla Prabhupāda's innermost desire.

As manager of Śrī Caitanya Maṭha, Śrī Vinoda-bihārī Brahmacārī had two horses of excellent breed that he used to ride while managing the land. At that time he used to live in great pomp just for the sake of his service to the *maṭha*. In the midst of his devotional practices, he was also linked to many social welfare organizations. He was a member of the Nadiyā District Board, the Education and Finance Committee, the Kṛṣṇanagara Local Board, and the Union Board and Bench Court, and he was also the chairman of the Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda Institute. He gave advice on various matters to the Divisional Commissioner, the District Judge and other highly posted persons. Everyone, from the highest to the lowest, had special respect for him.

A special contribution to the establishment of Bāgbāzār Gauḍīya Maṭha

Śrīla Prabhupāda Sarasvatī Ṭhākura established Bāgbāzār Gauḍīya Maṭha and the foundation of the temple in the city of Kolkata on 26 September 1928. Śrī Jagad-bandhu, a wealthy patron of Kolkata, donated the land and later also met all the expenses of the devotees' quarters, the temple room, the assembly hall and so forth.

Śrī Jagad-bandhu was originally a resident of the village of Vānarīpāḍā in the Variśāla district of East Bengal. Later he started a business in Kolkata and became very wealthy. He used to live in Bāgbāzār on the bank of the Gaṅgā in a gorgeous, palatial house. Once, in their *guru-sevā*, Śrī Vinoda-bihārī Brahmacārī and his godbrother Mukunda-vinoda Bābājī Mahārāja were begging for alms (performing *bhikṣā*) and preaching in that area when they arrived at Śrī Jagad-bandhu's home. 'The house of Śrī Jagad-bandhu dāsa of Variśāla' was written on the entrance door. Vinoda-bihārī suddenly remembered that the man was a subject of his family's protectorate. He told the gatekeeper to say that Vinoda-bihārī from Vānarīpāḍā wanted to see Śrī Jagad-bandhu dāsa.

When Jagad-bandhujī heard this, he immediately ran barefoot to meet Vinoda-bihārī. Recognizing the *brahmacārī* as his landlord, he

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Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha, Bāgbāzār, Kolkata

knelt down and offered *praṇāma*. With great respect, he honoured his guests by offering them high seats. Listening to their *bhagavat-kathā*, he became very pleased, and his faith increased even more when he heard that Vinoda-bihārī had now left home and was engaged in various kinds of services to *jagad-guru* Śrīla Prabhupāda. Jagad-bandhujī then expressed a desire to perform any kind of *sevā* to the *maṭha*. He had previously resolved to donate land to Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha but now, having heard Śrī Vinoda-bihārī's *hari-kathā*, he said, "Is it right for one person to give a plate and someone else to serve food on it? That will not do. I shall carry the entire financial responsibility for the construction of both the *maṭha* and the temple." And so it happened. In 1930, Śrī Śrī Gaura-Rādhā-Vinodānandajī were installed in Their enormous temple with *harināma-saṅkīrtana* and much pomp and grandeur. That is how the great endeavour of Śrī Vinoda-bihārī, a supremely renounced servant who was completely dedicated to the lotus feet of his *guru*, became the root cause of the establishment of the Bāgbāzār Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha.

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A Vedāntic explanation of the word paramānanda – supreme bliss

Every year on the occasion of Śrī Gaura-janmotsava, a session of Śrī Dhāma Pracāriṇī Sabhā was held at Śrī Māyāpura Yoga-pīṭha. During these meetings, Śrīla Prabhupāda would request the *maṭha* residents to praise and glorify each other. In 1929, Śrīla Prabhupāda ordered Śrī Vinoda-bihārī Brahmacārī to glorify Śrī Paramānanda Brahmacārī Vidyāratna. Śrī Paramānanda Brahmacārī, an intimate and one-pointed servant of Śrīla Prabhupāda, was a close friend of Śrī Vinoda-bihārījī. They lived together, eating, drinking, sleeping and performing *sevā* for Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Śrī Vinoda-bihārī stood up and first offered praise to his *guru*, saying:

mūkhaṁ karoti vācālaṁ
paṅguṁ laṅghayate girim
yat-kṛpā tam ahaṁ vande
paramānanda-mādhavam

I worship Mādhava, the embodiment of supreme bliss (*paramānanda*), whose mercy turns the dumb into eloquent speakers and enables the lame to cross mountains.

Śrī Vinoda-bihārījī then began to describe all the good qualities of Paramānanda Prabhu. "The single-minded *guru-sevā* of Śrī Paramānanda Prabhu is the ideal for *guru-sevakas*. He is always with Śrīla Prabhupāda like a shadow, performing tasks such as cooking, washing his cloth, managing travel arrangements and massaging Prabhupāda's feet at bedtime. Sometimes Paramānanda Prabhu returns to the *maṭha* late, when Śrīla Prabhupāda is taking rest. But even if it is midnight he will knock on the door and call, 'Prabhupāda! Prabhupāda!' for Prabhupāda



Śrī Paramānanda Prabhu

to open the door. At that time, Śrīla Prabhupāda himself will open the door of his *bhajana-kuṭī* for him. Paramānanda Prabhu is exceptionally expert in constructing temples and *maṭhas*, in operating the printing press, and in all aspects of running a *maṭha*. He cannot stay alive without serving Prabhupāda. It is not possible to perform service to Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga without the mercy of Śrī Paramānanda Prabhu, who has such exclusive *guru-niṣṭhā*. All glories to Śrī Paramānanda Prabhu!

prasīda paramānanda
prasīda parameśvara
ādhi-vyādhi-bhujaṅgena
daṣṭaṁ mām uddhara prabho

Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad
(1.45)

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> Have mercy upon me, Paramānanda! Have mercy upon me, Parameśvara! I am bitten by the serpent of material miseries. Prabhu, please deliver me.

"In Vedānta, the concept of cultivation of *paramānanda*, or supreme bliss, is also mentioned: *ānandamayo 'bhyāsāt* (*Brahma-sūtra* 1.1.12). The deep meaning of practising *paramānanda* is to engage completely and constantly in the pursuit of the personification of *paramānanda*, Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa, with one's body, mind and words. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, who established the mission to fulfil Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's innermost desire, has instructed us how to cultivate this *paramānanda*. '*Ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānuśīlanaṁ bhaktir uttamā – uttama-bhakti* is the favourable and uninterrupted cultivation of service for Kṛṣṇa's pleasure with body, mind and words.' Unless we cultivate *paramānanda* favourably – that is, unless we practise the process of *uttama-bhakti* – we will not obtain *paramānanda*. Therefore, in the conclusion of the *Brahma-sūtra* it is said, *anāvṛttiḥ śabdād anāvṛttiḥ śabdāt*. Here, the word *śabda* refers to *śabda-brahma*, transcendental sound vibration. The name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the personification of *paramānanda*, is that very transcendental *śabda-brahma*:

nāma cintāmaṇiḥ kṛṣṇaś-
caitanya-rasa-vigrahaḥ
pūrṇaḥ śuddho nitya-mukto
'bhinnatvān nāma-nāminoḥ

"This means, 'The transcendentally blissful name of Kṛṣṇa is a wish-fulfilling gem, which bestows all spiritual desires. Because the name of Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa Himself are non-different, it is the personification of transcendental *rasa*, it is complete, it is beyond *māyā* and it is eternal.' [*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, 1.2.231]

"Furthermore, in the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (2.7) it is said, '*raso vai saḥ, rasaṁ hyevāyaṁ labdhvānandī bhavati, ko hyevanyāt kaḥ prāṇyāt, yadeṣa ākāśa ānando na syāt, eṣa hyevānandayāti* – The supremely blissful (*paramānanda*) Supreme Absolute Truth is the personification of *rasa* (transcendental mellows). The living entity experiences *paramānanda* by obtaining this personification of *rasa*. If this Absolute Truth, the personification of supreme bliss, did not exist, then who could remain alive? Who would endeavour to protect his life? Hence, *brahma*, the personification of *paramānanda* filled with *rasa*, gives *ānanda* (bliss) to everyone.'

"We also see this established in *Caturveda-śikhā*: '*naivete jāyante naiteṣām ajñāna-bandho na muktiḥ sarva eṣa hyete pūrṇā ajarā amṛtāḥ paramāḥ paramānanda iti* – The name of Bhagavān (which is *śabda-brahma*), Bhagavān Himself and all His incarnations are not conditioned like the *jīvas*, nor do They take birth like them. They are complete, unchanging, immortal and the personification of *paramānanda*, supreme bliss.'

"Only by cultivating this *paramānanda rasa-svarūpa śabda-brahma*, that is to say, only by performing *saṅkīrtana* of the name of Bhagavān, can one stop our rebirth forever. The meaning of the word *anāvṛtti* [from the *sūtra anāvṛttiḥ śabdād*] is 'prevention of rebirth in this material world'.

"The *pūrva-pakṣa*, or first objection, to this statement is as follows: 'The meaning of *paramānanda* (highest bliss) is only *bhāva*, or sentiment, so how is it possible for this *paramānanda* to have shape or form?' Therefore the *sūtra*, *arūpavadeva tat-pradhānatvāt* in

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Brahma-sūtra, is cited. *Parama-puruṣa* (the Supreme Person), *parama-tattva* (the Supreme Absolute Truth), or *brahma*, is *na-rūpavat*; in other words, 'not like a form'. He does not take form. The Supreme Truth is Himself form, and it is possible to have His *darśana*. Therefore the next *sūtra* says, '*api saṁrādhane pratyakṣānumānābhyām* – through worship one can certainly have *darśana* both in the heart and directly of the Supreme Truth.'

"In the Śrutis and *Vedānta-sūtra* this *paramānanda-puruṣa*, or the supremely blissful Person, is called *ānandaṁ brahma*, the blissful *brahma*. *Ānanda* (bliss) is a synonym of *prīti* (love and affection). All *jīvas* are actually striving to attain *paramānanda*. One who desires liberation will search for liberation (*mokṣa*), thinking that to be *paramānanda*, the supreme bliss. Hedonists run after enjoyment of the senses, considering that to be *ānanda*. The devotees strive for *sevā* to Kṛṣṇa, accepting that as *paramānanda*. In other words, everyone is simply searching for *paramānanda*. However, *bhagavad-bhakti* is the only personification of *paramānanda*, and therefore it is only through *bhakti* that one can reach *paramānanda-svarūpa* Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is the personification of supreme bliss."

The audience was fascinated by Śrī Vinoda-bihārī's lecture. Śrīla Prabhupāda was especially pleased with his Vedāntic deliberations and gave Śrī Vinoda-bihārī Brahmacārī all his books on Vedānta. "Study this literature with full concentration," he said. "I have not seen such taste for Vedānta in anyone else. General people say that the term Vedānta refers to *nirviśeṣa-jñāna* (impersonalism), but Vedānta is really *bhakti* literature. You should stress this in your preaching and preach from it."



"He always preached *śuddha-bhakti*, the main subject of the Vedānta, and instructed others to do the same. This is the unique distinction of his life."

After accepting *tridaṇḍa-sannyāsa*, Śrī Vinoda-bihārī thoroughly fulfilled this innermost desire of Śrīla Prabhupāda. Establishing Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti, he bestowed the dress of *tridaṇḍa-sannyāsa* on qualified members of the Samiti and added the title 'Bhaktivedānta' to the names of initiates such as Vāmana, Nārāyaṇa, Trivikrama and others. He always preached *śuddha-bhakti*, the main subject of the Vedānta, and instructed others to do the same. This is the unique distinction of his life.

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Śrī Vinoda-bihārī and the Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda Institute

In April 1931, Śrīla Prabhupāda established the Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda Institute in Śrī Dhāma Māyāpura for education in transcendental subject matters. Śrīla Prabhupāda was the chairman of the managing committee of the school, Śrīmad Bhakti Pradīpa Tīrtha Mahārāja was the headmaster, and among the other members of the committee, Śrī Vinoda-bihārī Brahmacārī was appointed the director. Śrī Vinoda-bihārī changed the standards that were established by the Englishmen. He announced that the school would have breaks on Pañcamī and Ekādaśī instead of Sundays, and a half-day vacation on Caturthī and Daśamī instead of Saturday. Ekādaśī was chosen because it is the day of Mādhava (*mādhava-tithi*) the mother of pure devotion. *Pañcamī-tithi* is the appearance day (*tithi*) of Śuddhā-sarasvatī, the goddess of learning, and also of Śrīla Sarasvatī Prabhupāda. Previously the holiday was on Sundays, due to worship in the churches. In addition, he also established holidays on the different appearance and disappearance days of distinctive Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas*. Religious teaching was compulsory in this school. Students who failed the exams in the religious subjects were not allowed to enter the next grade, even if they had passed the exams in all the other subjects. Śrī Vinoda-bihārī defended his emphasis on religious ethics with the argument that the welfare of society is not possible through atheistic education. For this work he received special commendation and praise from the Navadvīpa-dhāma Pracāriṇī Sabhā.



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The title 'Kṛtiratna'

In 1932, at the 38th annual session of the Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma Pracāriṇī Sabhā, the chairman, Śrīla Prabhupāda, bestowed the title 'Kṛtiratna' (meaning, 'whose every act and accomplishment is a jewel') on Śrī Vinoda-bihārī Brahmacārī. *Kṛtiratna* indicates *bhakti* and the title was an embodiment of a blessing from Śrī Gaura. The letter of blessing read as follows:

śrī śrī māyāpura-candro vijayatetamām
śrī śrī navadvīpa-dhāma pracāriṇyāḥ sabhāyāḥ
śrī śrī gaurāśīrvād-patram

śrī-mahāprabhu-sevārthaṁ
śrī-dhāmni-bhūmi rakṣakaḥ
prajāpālanadakṣo yaḥ
śrī-caitanya-maṭhāśritaḥ

śrī-vinoda-vihāyārkhya
brahmacāri-varāya ca
prabhupādāntaraṅgāya
sarva-sad-guṇa-śāline

dhāma-pracāriṇī-saṁsat-
sabhyaistamai pradīyate
'kṛtiratna' iti khyātum
upādhi-bhūṣaṇaṁ mudā

gaṅgā-pūrva-taṭastha-śrī-
navadvīpa-sthale pare
śrī-māyāpura-dhāmastha-
yoga-pīṭha-mahattame

guṇeṣu vā suśubhrāṁśu-
śakābde 'smin śubhāśraye
phālguṇa-pūrṇimāyāṁ śrī-
gaurāvirbhāva-vāsare

(Signed) Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī,
Chairman

Śrī Vinoda-bihārī Brahmacārī, the servitor of the Śrī Caitanya Maṭha, has protected the land of Śrī Dhāma Māyāpura for the service of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and is expert in protecting his dependants in every way. He is Śrīla Prabhupāda's intimate servant and is adorned with all the good qualities of a Vaiṣṇava. At the auspicious time of the appearance of Śrī Gaura on Phālguna-pūrṇimā, in 1853 Śakābda Era, the eminent members of the Śrī Dhāma Pracāriṇī Sabhā have joyfully decorated him with the title 'Kṛtiratna' at Yogapīṭha, the topmost place of Śrī Māyāpura-dhāma in Śrī Navadvīpa, situated on the eastern bank of the Gaṅgā.

Serving the Lord through court proceedings

Once Śrī Vinoda-bihārī Brahmacārī attended a religious assembly in Kṛṣṇanagara, at which attorneys, barristers, a retired judge and other eminent learned and respected people were present. Many of them gave sincere and thoughtful speeches, and one in particular spoke with great humility and regret. "I have uselessly wasted my whole life in court proceedings," he began. "My birth has gone in vain because I have not performed *hari-bhajana*, the worship of Lord Hari. Human life can become successful only through *hari-bhakti*, but I have distanced myself from it. Now in old age my senses are becoming weak, and there is no certainty when death will come. I don't understand what to do now." Speaking in this way he prayed at the lotus feet of the Vaiṣṇavas and Bhagavān for *bhagavad-bhakti*.

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At the end of the meeting the respected chairman asked Śrī Vinoda-bihārī Brahmacārī Kṛtiratna Prabhu if he would please say something. He stood up and began to speak simply and naturally, but with very powerful language. "The hidden purport of all the scriptures is devotion to the Supreme Lord. Of all forms of *bhagavad-bhakti*, the *bhakti* that is imbued with *prema* (*prema-mayī bhakti*), as seen in the associates of Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa in Vraja, is topmost. Therefore Vaiṣṇava *ācārya* Śrī Cakravartī Ṭhākura has said:

> *ārādhyo bhagavān vrajeśa-tanaya-*
> *stad-dhāma vṛndāvanaṁ*
> *ramyā kācid upāsanā vraja-vadhū-*
> *vargeṇa yā kalpitā*
> *śrīmad-bhāgavataṁ pramāṇam amalaṁ*
> *premā pumartho mahān*
> *śrī-caitanya-mahāprabhor matam idaṁ*
> *tatrādaro naḥ paraḥ*

Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the supreme worshipful deity. Śrī Vṛndāvana-dhāma is as worshipful as Kṛṣṇa, because it is the place of His pastimes. Among all forms of worship, the *gopīs'* worship of Kṛṣṇa is supreme. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* offers the supreme, flawless evidence of this truth. This is the teaching of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

"In the *śāstras* there are also examples of court proceedings. I think that the performance of court proceedings is the best *sādhana* in *hari-bhakti*. Besides, court proceedings are actually *hari-bhakti*; it is just that people do not understand how to perform them. For those unfortunate souls, the opportunity to attain *bhagavad-bhakti* is very remote.

"We are in the party of the most worshipful Śrīmatī Rādhikā, and our special service is to arrange for Her meeting with Kṛṣṇa. On one occasion, Śrī Kṛṣṇa went to meet with Candrāvalī in her *kuñja*. Rādhā's *sakhīs* made up some excuse to extricate Him from there, and they brought Him to Śrī Rādhā's *kuñja* at Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa. There, in front of Kuñjeśvarī Śrīmatī Rādhikā He was made to write, 'I am the servant of Rādhājī. I will never leave Rādhājī and go elsewhere.' Then He had to sign this declaration. A few days later, though, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, compelled by His nature, neglected this plea and again went to Candrāvalī's *kuñja*. Rādhā's *sakhīs*, seeing that Śrī Kṛṣṇa was so opposed to Śrī Vṛndāvaneśvarī Rādhikā, filed a court case against Him. Kṛṣṇa was not present at the proceedings, and Rādhājī's *sakhīs*, winning the case, issued a court decree with which He was bound to comply. By means of a warrant they arranged His sweet meeting with Śrīmatī Rādhikā."

"We are in the party of the most worshipful Śrīmatī Rādhikā, and our special service is to arrange for Her meeting with Kṛṣṇa."

The lawyers, the judge and all the other people were taken aback with Śrī Kṛtiratna Prabhu's speech, which was filled with scriptural conclusions. His philosophical lecture left a deep impression in everyone's heart and made them realize that the most important achievement in the human form of life is to attain the service of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda, and nothing else. He then explained that a higher birth, beauty, education, wealth, etc., are not required for *śrī kṛṣṇa-bhajana*. On the contrary, *kṛṣṇa-bhajana* is the right of every human being. Thus, it is essential for all of us to perform *hari-bhajana*.

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Ideal Vaiṣṇava life

Even though Śrī Vinoda-bihārī Brahmacārī was from an educated and respected family of landowners, he did not feel any pride. In his *maṭha* life he was tolerant, liberal and soft-spoken, and he would always help the poor and distressed. The vow and purpose of his life was: "*bhāla nā khāibe āra bhāla nā paribe … vraje rādhā-kṛṣṇa sevā mānase karibe* – do not eat rich foods and do not dress opulently. … rather, always serve Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana within your mind" (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Antya-līlā* 6.236, 237).

Śrī Kṛtiratna Prabhu's *sādhana* was to do anything to please Kṛṣṇa and to give up all kinds of enjoyment for himself. With great love he honoured whatever deity *mahā-prasāda* was served. He never had the desire to eat anything delicious and throughout his life he never complained if there was too little salt in the *mahā-prasāda* or if it was not tasty. When he was the manager of Caitanya Maṭha in the early days, he and the other *brahmacārīs* were living and performing their *sādhana-bhajana* with great difficulty because of the *maṭha's* impoverished condition. Nonetheless, they were completely satisfied with such a life, and their dealings with each other were very affectionate.

First meeting with pūjyapāda Śrīdhara Mahārāja

Once after Navadvīpa *parikramā*, I [the author] and a few *brahmacārīs* went to Śrī Caitanya Sārasvata Maṭha in Koleragañja (Navadvīpa) to have *darśana* of *parama-pūjyapāda parivrājakācārya-varya* Śrīmad Bhakti Rakṣaka Śrīdhara Gosvāmī Mahārāja[1]. We will never forget his description of his first sight of *paramārādhya* Śrīla Gurudeva:

"While I was a student in the last year of law school, I went to take *darśana* of Māyāpura. First, I took *darśana* of the deities in the temple at Yogapīṭha, and then Śrīvāsa-aṅgana, Advaita-bhavana, Gadādhara-bhavana and other places. While I was taking *darśana* at *ākara-maṭha-rāja* Śrī Caitanya Maṭha, I witnessed an astonishing scene. A beautiful young *brahmacārī* in a very nice white *dhotī* and *kurtā* was sitting on a chair beneath a jackfruit tree. He was resting his legs on a table in front of him, the left leg on top of the right, and was slowly swinging on the chair.



The jack-fruit tree, close to Śrīla Prabhupāda's *bhajana-kuṭīra*, under which Śrī Vinoda-bihārī was sitting taking care of the management and instructing the devotees.

1 Editor: see Appendix page 391

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Pūjyapāda Śrīdhara Mahārāja

Both his eyes were closed and it seemed that he was immersed in deep thought. Various residents of the *maṭha* were coming before him. All of them – whether young or old, wearing white or saffron – bowed their heads to the ground and offered *praṇāma* to that *brahmacārī* with great respect, and then went on with their service. At one point, a well-built, grave *sannyāsī* came, offered his *praṇāma* and stood in front of him. Hearing some noise, the *brahmacārī* opened his eyes, sat up and looked at the *sannyāsī*. The *sannyāsī* asked something with great humility, the *brahmacārī* gave some answer and then the *sannyāsī* again paid his *praṇāma* and went away."

Pūjyapāda Śrīdhara Mahārāja continued, "I watched all this very attentively, and wondered, 'Everyone is respectfully paying *praṇāma* to this young man and even important *sannyāsīs* come to get advice and instructions from him. Who is he?' I asked a *maṭha* resident standing nearby about this exceptional *brahmacārī*. He told me that his name was Śrī Vinoda-bihārī Brahmacārī Kṛtiratna, and that he was the *maṭha* manager. The man said, 'He is the foremost among the intimate servants of Śrīla Prabhupāda. Although he appears common, he is actually deeply philosophical and learned in *bhakti-siddhānta*. He has contributed much towards the development of Śrī Caitanya Maṭha, Yogapīṭha and Śrī Dhāma Māyāpura, and is prominent on the managing committee of the Bhaktivinoda Institute.' I became amazed hearing this.

"Shortly thereafter, I went to have *darśana* of Śrīla Prabhupāda. I was completely overcome by his grave personality and powerful speech. At that time I vowed that now I would also leave the perishable world and perform *hari-bhajana*, because without it, life is useless. Śrīla Prabhupāda recited one verse from the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.9.29) that made an indelible imprint in my heart:

labdhvā su-durlabham idaṁ bahu-sambhavānte
mānuṣyam artha-dam anityam apīha dhīraḥ
tūrṇaṁ yateta na pated anu-mṛtyu yāvan
niḥśreyasāya viṣayaḥ khalu sarvataḥ syāt

"This means, 'The human birth is extremely rare and is only obtained after many births. But although this birth is temporary, it can give the highest benefit. Therefore an intelligent person does not delay even for a moment to endeavour for the ultimate auspiciousness before death.'

"After that I returned to my home, but very soon I gave up household life forever and came to Prabhupāda's lotus feet. As a *maṭhavāsī*, I had great affection for and friendship with Śrī Vinoda-bihārī Brahmacārī. We used to discuss Vedāntic *siddhānta* and the deep concepts of *bhakti*, and with faith everyone would listen to our discussions."

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Prabhupāda's opinion of an ideal guru-sevaka

Śrī Vinoda-bihārī Brahmacārī was sole manager of the *maṭha* properties. For the service of the *maṭha* he would have go to the civil court from time to time to meet with high officials, and he appeared to live an extravagant lifestyle. Seeing the externals, some uninformed *maṭha* residents concluded that Śrī Vinoda-bihārī did not have any special feeling for *bhakti* and was only expert in material matters. They assumed that he could not have time to follow the different limbs of *bhakti*, because he was well-known in the community at large as he was always engrossed in mundane affairs such as overseeing the tenants and going to the court. The issue did not stop at the *maṭha* in Māyāpura; some *brahmacārīs* in the Delhi Gauḍīya Maṭha wrote Śrīla Prabhupāda an extensive letter about Śrī Vinoda-bihārī.

When Śrīla Prabhupāda received this letter, he became very displeased. He wrote back, forcefully defending Vinoda-bihārī, saying that Vinoda-bihārī was an extraordinary and ideal Vaiṣṇava with exceptional *guru-niṣṭhā*. "He is fully learned in the difficult *siddhānta* of *bhakti*," Śrīla Prabhupāda told the *brahmacārīs*, "and, in particular, he has penetrated the deep concepts of Vedānta. He is extremely enthusiastic to perform *bhajana*, he is exclusively endeavouring to please Śrī Hari, Guru and the Vaiṣṇavas, and he has captured the mood of renunciation. Furthermore, he is affectionate and compassionate, and on top of that, he is a competent leader with excellent organizational and managerial capabilities. Those who do not consider Vinoda to be a Vaiṣṇava are themselves not Vaiṣṇavas at all. No one can prevent the inevitable destruction of those who offend Vaiṣṇavas because they do not understand their inner heart."



Śrīpāda Narottamānanda Brahmacārī

Śrīpāda Narottamānanda Brahmacārī was one of the prominent *sevakas* in the Delhi Gauḍīya Maṭha at that time. He was a famous speaker of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and had deep faith in Śrīla Prabhupāda. By good fortune he read Śrīla Prabhupāda's letter, which gave him strong confidence in Śrī Vinoda-bihārī Brahmacārī. After Śrīla Prabhupāda departed from this world, Śrī Narottamānanda left Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha and went to Śrī Dhāma Navadvīpa together with his godbrothers, Śrī Vinoda-bihārī Kṛtiratna Prabhu, Śrī Narahari Sevā-vigraha Prabhu and others. He performed *sādhana-bhajana* at Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti and travelled around India, preaching *śuddha-bhakti*. While at the Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti, he revealed to our worshipful *gurupāda-padma* the contents of the letter written by Śrīla Prabhupāda to the *brahmacārīs* of the Delhi Gauḍīya Maṭha.

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The transfer of Śrīla Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja's samādhi

In 1932, the Bhagavatī Bhāgīrathī inundated the countryside and her waters flooded every direction. The Gaṅgā's strong current had cut the western bank, which was fast disappearing into the flood. In Kuliyā, on that western bank, the *samādhi* of Śrīla Prabhupāda's most beloved Śrī Gurudeva, Śrīla Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja, was located. Śrīla Prabhupāda had performed Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja's *samādhi* ceremony with his own hands in 1915 on Utthāna-ekādaśī. Now, when Śrīla Prabhupāda came to learn that the *samādhi* of his *śrī gurudeva* was about to be carried away by the flow of the Gaṅgā, he instructed his intimate servant Śrī Vinoda-bihārī Brahmacārī to rescue the complete *samādhi* by some means or other, and to re-establish it on the bank of Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa in Śrī Dhāma Māyāpura.

After some days and nights of intense and ceaseless labour, Śrī Vinoda-bihārī Prabhu and his dear godbrother and friend Śrīpāda Narahari Sevā-vigraha Prabhu were able to save the *samādhi* with the help of other *guru-sevakas*. Accompanied by *saṅkīrtana*, they brought it well protected and in its complete form to Śrī Caitanya Maṭha. Śrīla Prabhupāda was very pleased, and he himself began to dig the foundation for the *samādhi* on the banks of Rādhā-kuṇḍa, with the help of his prominent *sevakas*: Śrīpāda Kuñja-bihārī Vidyābhūṣaṇa, Śrī Aprākṛta Bhakti Sāraṅga, Śrī Bhakti Rakṣaka Śrīdhara Mahārāja, Śrī Narahari Sevā-vigraha Prabhu and Śrī Vinoda-bihārī Kṛtiratna Prabhu. Upon completing the *samādhi*, Śrīla Prabhupāda became overwhelmed by the pain of separation from his *gurudeva*. When his intimate servants saw Prabhupāda's



Śrīla Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja's *samādhi-mandira* on the bank of Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa at Śrī Caitanya Maṭha

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Śrīla Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja's *samādhi-mūrti*

face, overcome as he was with feelings of separation, tears began to flow like streams from their eyes. Vinoda-bihārī Brahmacārī sat close to the lotus feet of Śrīla Prabhupāda and washed those feet with his tears.

When Śrīla Prabhupāda's *śrī gurudeva*, Śrīla Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja, entered *aprakaṭa-līlā*, Prabhupāda was preparing to perform his *samādhi* ceremony. At that time, the licentious and sinful *bābājīs* of Kuliyā created various obstacles. However, in the end they could not stop him. Now, when the *samādhi* was being transferred from Kuliyā to Śrī Dhāma Māyāpura, the *bābājīs* again tried to obstruct them. When they were unable to stop the transfer, they filed a case in the Kṛṣṇanagara court, naming Śrī Vinoda-bihārī Brahmacārī as the main defendant in the removal of the *samādhi*.

The case was presented in the court of a scrupulous Christian judge, who deliberated upon it very seriously. According to precedent in English law of that time, it was a criminal offence to move a tomb from its original site, and this violation was subject to a severe penalty in the West. When the judge had heard the arguments from both sides, he decided to pronounce a harsh judgment on the accused. Considering this, Śrī Vinoda-bihārī Brahmacārī gravely told the judge, "Respected Sir, you should know that we are not followers of Christianity. We are pure Vaiṣṇavas following the Indian Vedic tradition and rules. According to *vaiṣṇava-dharma*, one is allowed to transfer a *samādhi* when there are special reasons constituting extraordinary circumstances. There are thousands of statements testifying to this." When the judge heard this, he reversed his decision and passed judgment in Śrī Vinoda-bihārī's favour, declaring, "The defendant is released without charge." The lawyers and other officials were greatly impressed by Śrī Vinoda-bihārī's argument, and they lavishly praised his diverse talents. Śrīla Prabhupāda was also very pleased and entrusted Kṛtiratna Prabhu with all the court proceedings of the Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha mission. It would have been very difficult for an ordinary person to accomplish what Śrī Vinoda-bihārī Brahmacārī achieved in his service to Śrīla Prabhupāda.

"The lawyers and other officials were greatly impressed by Śrī Vinoda-bihārī's argument, and they lavishly praised his diverse talents. Śrīla Prabhupāda was also very pleased and entrusted Kṛtiratna Prabhu with all the court proceedings of the Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha mission."

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Preaching of śuddha-bhakti

In the beginning of 1933, Vinoda-bihārī and a few *brahmacārīs* went to Śrī Dhāma Purī, Kaṭaka and other places in Orissa to fulfil Śrīla Prabhupāda's desire to spread the practice of *śuddha-bhakti* introduced by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. First they went to Puruṣottama Maṭha in Śrī Dhāma Purī, where they stayed for a few days. Śrī Vinoda-bihārī lectured on various topics to the *maṭha* devotees, and addressed other audiences as well. He also resolved many complicated problems at Puruṣottama Maṭha.

From there they went to Śrī Saccidānanda Maṭha in Kaṭaka. Besides helping to settle issues there, Vinoda-bihārī delivered a significant lecture entitled, 'The transcendental sound in Vedānta'. Hundreds of students, teachers and very educated and respectable listeners attended the lecture, which was given in the courtyard of a college. "One can only acquire initial knowledge of a thing through the ear, that is, through the sense of hearing. Therefore, hearing (*śravaṇa*) has a special significance in the Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya*. The only means of *śravaṇa* is through the ear, and not by any other knowledge-acquiring sense. At the same time, the ear has no access to the experience of the other senses. The eyes can see a ripe mango, the tongue can taste it, the nose can experience its delicious fragrance, and the skin can determine its softness or hardness, but the ears have no relation with the mango. Through the ear, however, one can comprehend that which the other senses are unable to see, taste or touch.

"For this reason, the *sad-guru* (bona fide spiritual master) first bestows transcendental sound vibration, or *śabda-brahma*, upon the *sat-śiṣya*, speaking it into the ear of the qualified disciple. In the line of *śrī guru-paramparā*, both the transcendental name of Bhagavān and the *mantras* [given at the time of *dīkṣā*] are called *śabda-brahma*. One cannot be a *sad-guru* unless he has realized *śabda-brahma*, is well versed in the topics of the Śrutis, which are the manifestation of *śabda-brahma*, and has no attraction for material sense objects. When ordinary people say the name Bhagavān, it is an ordinary sound that does not have the same transcendental power as the *śabda-brahma* uttered by *mahāpuruṣas*. Therefore, the bona fide spiritual master purifies the ear (*karṇa-saṁskāra*) of the qualified disciple by giving him *śabda-brahma* in the form of Bhagavān's name and in the form of *mantras*, both of which are possessed of transcendental power.

"The inner mood of the original speaker of the Veda, Vedānta, *Gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is concealed in the *mantras*, verses and words of the scriptures, and we cannot experience or understand this inner mood unless we hear from the *ācāryas* or Vaiṣṇavas in the *guru-paramparā*. This is because it is only through the *śiṣya-paramparā* (disciplic succession) that one can understand the mood of the original speaker, whether he be Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Śrī Nārāyaṇa, Śrī Nārada, Śrī Vyāsa or someone else. One cannot take this mood to heart through independent intelligence.

sampradāya vihīnā ye mantrās
te viphalā matāḥ
ataḥ kalau bhaviṣyanti
catvāraḥ sampradāyinaḥ

Padma Purāṇa

A *mantra* is useless unless it is received through a *sampradāya*, and therefore, there are four Vaiṣṇava *sampradāyas* in Kali-yuga.

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"One special consideration is as follows. The meaning of the words in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and other scriptures is dependent on the accent and pronunciation of the original speaker of those words. The sentence 'Rāma, where did you go?' for example, can have many meanings, depending on the tone and emphasis with which it is pronounced. The tone of the original speaker, which conveys the real meaning of his speech, can be understood only through the *guru-paramparā*. Consequently, in regard to transcendence, both spiritual sound vibration (*śabda-brahma*) and the ear, which can capture the essence of *śabda-brahma*, are regarded as particularly important."

(This we heard directly from Śrīla Guru Mahārāja.)

"The inner mood of the original speaker of the Veda, Vedānta, *Gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is concealed in the *mantras*, verses and words of the scriptures, and we cannot experience or understand this inner mood unless we hear from the *ācāryas* or Vaiṣṇavas in the *guru-paramparā*."

Interest in philosophy

Sometimes Śrī Vinoda-bihārī Brahmacārī had to go on long journeys in the course of managing the branch Gauḍīya Maṭhas or for preaching. At those times, he invariably kept with him *Jaiva-dharma*, special issues of *Śrī Gauḍīya, Tattva-sandarbha* and other philosophical works. He would get especially absorbed in studying these books while riding on the trains. In those days, general *maṭha* residents were prohibited from reading and studying Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī's Sandarbhas, Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa's *Govinda-bhāṣya, Bhāṣya-pīṭhaka*, etc. It was also considered inappropriate for common devotees to study the Tenth Canto of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Only those few devotees who possessed the ability to understand *tattva-jñāna* (knowledge of reality) were permitted to study these books with a qualified Vaiṣṇava. One day, Śrī Ananta Vāsudeva Prabhu[2] was searching for Śrīpāda Kṛtiratna Prabhu and unexpectedly arrived at his *bhajana-kuṭīra* where he was deeply absorbed in studying *Tattva-sandarbha*. At that time, Śrī Vāsudeva Prabhu was acknowledged among Prabhupāda's disciples as a prominent authority on *bhakti-siddhānta*, and everyone faithfully accepted his explanations.

Śrī Ananta Vāsudeva immediately took the *Tattva-sandarbha* from Śrī Kṛtiratna Prabhu's hands. "Vinoda!" he exclaimed, "You are studying *Tattva-sandarbha*! Do you understand anything of what you are reading or are you just turning the pages? Don't you know that it contains deep philosophical *siddhānta*? Even great scholars can hardly understand this book." Śrī Kṛtiratna

2 For some time after Śrīla Prabhupāda's *aprakaṭa-līlā*, Śrī Ananta Vāsudeva was the chairman and *ācārya* of the Gauḍīya Maṭha, but he was later removed from that post.

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Prabhu remained calm and sober, and stood without making any reply. Observing his silence Śrī Vāsudeva Prabhu again asked, "Why don't you speak? Do you understand anything or not?"

Śrī Vinoda-bihārī answered gravely, "You can ask me any question from the book." Śrīpāda Vāsudeva Prabhu then asked extremely difficult questions on *pramāṇa-tattva, prameya-tattva, sambandha, abhidheya* and *prayojana-tattva*, and Śrī Kṛtiratna Prabhu answered all his questions in simple, easy-to-understand language.

Śrī Vāsudeva Prabhu had until then considered Kṛtiratna Prabhu to be an ordinary, though diligent, young *brahmacārī* who lacked *tattva-jñāna*. He never imagined that Vinoda would ever be able to answer such profound philosophical questions. Now he was amazed. This incident inspired in him a mood of respect and honour for Vinoda. He became even more wonder-struck when he read Vinoda's essays and articles. Vinoda's literary style was extremely deep, exhibiting refined, ornamental language. After Śrī Vāsudeva Prabhu became *ācārya*, he told his eminent writers and scholarly disciples to learn the art of literary composition from Śrī Vinoda-bihārī Brahmacārī.

Śrī mahā-mantra and kīrtana

In 1933, Śrīla Saccidānanda Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's *virahotsava* (disappearance day festival) was held at his *samādhi-mandira* at Svānanda-sukhada-kuñja in Śrī Godruma. Śrīla Prabhupāda was present at this festival with his disciples, including his intimate servant Śrī Vinoda-bihārī Brahmacārī. Pre-eminent Vaiṣṇavas from all over Bengal assembled together for the occasion, and Śrīla Prabhupāda gave his dear Vinoda the responsibility of attending to the special guests.

The honourable Śrī Sītānātha Bhakti-tīrtha, a disciple of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, also came, and was given a room with great respect. He was considered a prominent *kīrtana* singer in Bengal and was expert in all kinds of *rāga-raginīs*, rhythms, tunes, modulations of the voice, etc. He was also a master of harmonium, *esarāj, vīṇā, mṛdaṅga, tablā* and other instruments.

After the celebration, Bhakti-tīrtha Prabhu seated Śrī Vinoda-bihārī Brahmacārī near him with great affection and started to perform *kīrtana*. He began to sing the *mahā-mantra* to various *rāga-raginīs* as he played the harmonium. As he did this, he modulated his voice in such a way that it took him ten or fifteen minutes to sing the sixteen words of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* from the first 'Hare' to the last. In addition, he was trying to display deep spiritual emotion by gesturing excessively with his hands and arms.

Some time later, when Śrī Vinoda-bihārījī came to Śrīla Prabhupāda, Prabhupāda chided, "Did you listen to the *kīrtana*? One could have performed *kīrtana* of the whole *mahā-mantra* fifty times during the time it took him to pronounce Hare Kṛṣṇa only once." He further instructed Śrī Vinoda-bihārī, "Those who have no taste for *śrī nāma* and their *iṣṭadeva* are only attached to *tauryātrika kīrtana* with different melodious tunes for the happiness of their senses. I call these people the *tāl-ṭhokā sampradāya*, persons who are only interested in rhythm and not in inner moods.

"We can cast out inertia, laziness and all kinds of *anarthas* by faithfully performing *kīrtana* of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* in a loud voice.

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All our desires will be fulfilled when we become absorbed in this *kīrtana*. Members of the *tāl-ṭhokā sampradāya* are completely entangled in material profit, adoration and distinction. Pure Vaiṣṇavas always keep far away from this and instead absorb themselves in chanting *kṛṣṇa-nāma* with faith. The transcendental form, quality and pastimes of *nāmī prabhu* (the Supreme Lord who is addressed by the name) manifest in the hearts of those who perform *nāma-kīrtana* in this way. Love of God (*bhagavat-prema*) only develops through the chanting of such *śuddha-nāma*." Through this incident, *jagad-guru* Śrīla Prabhupāda instructed his qualified disciple on *nāma-bhajana*.

Once, Śrī Sītānātha Bhakti-tīrtha Mahodaya stayed for some time at Yogapīṭha in Māyāpura. One day at dawn he started to sing, "*rāī jāgo rāī jāgo*" in a very sweet voice, accompanying himself on the harmonium. Śrīla Prabhupāda heard about this and stopped the singing. "First wake up yourself," he said. "That means you should first be established in your eternal *svarūpa*, your spiritual form. Then it is proper to wake up Rāī (Śrīmatī Rādhikā)." Śrīla Prabhupāda told his disciples that *kīrtana* with very esoteric verses about *unnata-ujjvala-rasa* (the most elevated relationship of divine amorous love) should not be performed here and there, in shops, markets, on the street or before unqualified persons.

Decorated with the title 'Upadeśaka'

After the Śrī Gaura-janmotsava in 1934, the Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma Pracāriṇī Sabhā held its 40th annual session in Śrī Caitanya Maṭha's *avidyā-haraṇa*[3] temple hall. That year the chairman, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda, adorned Śrīpāda Vinoda-bihārī Kṛtiratna Mahāśaya with the title 'Upadeśaka' (advisor).

śrī śrī māyāpura-candro vijayatetamām
śrī śrī navadvīpa-dhāma pracāriṇyāḥ sabhāyāḥ
śrī śrī gaurāśīrvād-patram

sarvātmanā śrī-guru-gaura-sevā-
sampādkaḥ śuddha-matirna-yajñaḥ
sadāśayaḥ sat-yapathaikarāgī
guru-priyo 'yaṁ kṛtiratna-varyaḥ

śrī-vinoda-vihāryākhyā brahmacāri-varo mudā
upadeśaka ityetad-upanāmnā vimaṇḍitaḥ
gaṅgā-pūrva-taṭastha śrī-navadvīpa-sthalottame
śrī-māyāpura-dhāmasthe yogpīṭhāśraye pare
vāneṣuvasuśubhrāṁśu-śakābde maṅgalālaye
phālguṇa-pūrṇimāyāṁ śrī-gaurāvirbhāva-vāsare

(Signed) Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī,
Chairman

Kṛtiratna Śrī Vinoda-bihārī Brahmacārī is pure-hearted, devoted to ethical values, magnanimous and attached to the path of truth. He performs all kinds of service to *śrī guru*, and is extremely dear to *śrī gurudeva*. On this sacred day of the appearance of Śrī Gaurasundara on Phālguna-pūrṇima, year 1855 Śakābda Era, the members of the Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma Pracāriṇī Sabhā joyfully decorated him with the title 'Upadeśaka' at the auspicious Śrī Yogapīṭha, the topmost place of Śrī Māyāpura, the pinnacle of Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma, situated on the eastern bank of the Bhagavatī Bhāgīrthī.

On the second day of this same occasion the Viśva Vaiṣṇava Rāja Sabhā also praised

3 Editor: meaning, 'that which utterly destroys ignorance'

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Śrī Kṛtiratna Prabhu for accomplishing Śrī Gaurasundara's innermost desire: "Upadeśaka Śrīpāda Vinoda-bihārī Brahmacārī Kṛtiratna Mahāśaya has shown that he is a worthy recipient of the affection of Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga by performing activities to protect the property of Śrīman Mahāprabhu; by engaging himself in various services for Śrī Dhāma Māyāpura, Śrī Caitanya Maṭha and all its associate branch *maṭhas*; and especially by very expertly managing the present year's Śrī Dhāma *parikramā*. His lectures, which are filled with philosophical conclusions, are also extremely praiseworthy."

His Highness Sir John Anderson, Governor of Bengal, visits Śrī Dhāma Māyāpura

Due to the preaching of *jagad-guru* Śrīla Prabhupāda and his very qualified disciples, many faithful persons began to come from all over India to have *darśana* of Śrī Dhāma Māyāpura. Even prominent officials in the Indian government came with faith and eagerness. When news about Śrī Dhāma Māyāpura, the birthplace of Śrī Gaurasundara, reached the ears of His Highness Sir John Anderson, who was the Governor of Bengal at the time, he also developed a desire in his heart to have *darśana* of this sacred place. On 13 January 1935, he was called on special business to the District Headquarters in Kṛṣṇanagara. By the desire of Śrīla Prabhupāda, *paṇḍita* Śrīpāda Vinoda-bihārī Brahmacārī Upadeśaka Kṛtiratna went with *paṇḍita* Śrī Atula-candra Bandopādhyāya Bhakti Sāraṅga Gosvāmī to Kṛṣṇanagara to meet the Governor and to invite him, on behalf of Śrī Caitanya Maṭha and Viśva Vaiṣṇava Rāja Sabhā, to come to Śrī Dhāma Māyāpura.

Sir John Anderson respectfully accepted the invitation and arrived at Śrī Dhāma Māyāpura the next day with an army of followers and supporters. The Governor was welcomed at the entrance gate of Yogapīṭha by Śrīyuta Rāma-gopāla Vidyābhūṣaṇa (MA) from the Dhāma Pracāriṇī Sabhā, and by Śrīpāda Vinoda-bihārī



Śrī Vinoda-bihārī together with Śrīla Prabhupāda and Sir John Anderson at Śrī Yogapīṭha, Śrī Dhāma Māyāpura

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Brahmacārī Kṛtiratna, who was the secretary of the Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda Institute. Kṛtiratna Prabhu and Śrīpāda Bhakti Sāraṅga Gosvāmī Prabhu then took the Governor to meet with Śrīla Prabhupāda, after which there was a welcoming ceremony in the assembly hall. At Śrīla Prabhupāda's behest, Śrī Vinoda-bihārījī arranged the Governor's tour of Māyāpura and also took care of providing *mahā-prasāda* for the guests. After having *darśana* of Śrī Dhāma Māyāpura, the Governor expressed his heartfelt pleasure and said, "My long-cherished desire has been fulfilled today. I will be very pleased to arrange some governmental service for the development of this sacred place." Later, Śrīla Prabhupāda bade the Governor a royal farewell.

The inauguration of Śrī Mandira and the deities at Yogapīṭha

While Śrīpāda Vinoda-bihārī Brahmacārī Kṛtiratna was the manager of the Śrī Dhāma Māyāpura estate, he found several documents which provided clear evidence that Śrī Jagannātha Miśra's residence was indeed in Śrī Dhāma Māyāpura, and that Śrī Śacīnandana Gaurahari appeared under a neem tree there. In those articles the name of the birthplace of Gaurasundara was written under section 399 and the residence was mentioned in section 265.

When Vinoda-bihārījī first came to Māyāpura, it was simply a forest of *tulasī*. The Muslims had tried to grow crops there, but no matter what seeds they sowed, only *tulasī* plants sprouted. Earlier, while Śrī Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was performing *bhajana* at night in Godrumadvīpa, he had seen a divine light near a palm tree in Māyāpura. Later Śrīla Bhaktivinoda brought *vaiṣṇava-sārvabhauma* Śrī Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja to that place. Bābājī Mahārāja was extremely renowned in Gauḍa-maṇḍala, Kṣetra-maṇḍala and Vraja-maṇḍala. When he arrived there, he jumped up and started to dance wildly with upraised arms. [At the time he was over one hundred years old.] "This land is the appearance place of our Śacīnandana Gauracandra!" he exclaimed.

Śrī Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī also used to come to this uncultivated land. Sometimes he arrived at midnight, and no one could understand how he got there. When asked, he would reply, "I met some young cowherd boy on the road. He caught me and brought me here. But upon arriving here, I could not find that cowherd boy anywhere."

In March 1934, Śrīla Prabhupāda laid the foundation for the construction of a temple at Śrī Yogapīṭha-Māyāpura. The major responsibility for the construction was entrusted to Śrīpāda Kṛtiratna Prabhu. While the workers were digging the foundation for the temple, they found an astonishingly beautiful four-armed deity. When Śrī Vinoda-bihārī Brahmacārī heard this news, he immediately went there with Śrīpāda Narahari Prabhu and other leading *maṭha* residents, and they were elated to see the extraordinary deity.



The Adhokṣaja deity at Yogapīṭha

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A photo printed in the *Gauḍīya* after the completion of the temple at Yogapīṭha

When Śrīla Prabhupāda came some time later, he was also very pleased to see the deity. He declared that this was the Adhokṣaja deity that had been served by Śrī Jagannātha Miśra and Śrī Śacī-devī. Today this deity is being worshiped in the tall temple at Yogapīṭha.

Sakhīcaraṇa Rāya Bhakti-vijaya, a disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda and a well-known businessman in Kolkata, carried the entire expense of the grand and gorgeous temple. The magnificent temple, which is so high that it seems to kiss the sky, was constructed in a very short time under the supervision of Śrī Kṛtiratna Prabhu and Śrī Revatī-ramaṇa Brahmacārī. The ruler of independent Tripura, Śrīmad Vīravikrama Kiśoradeva Śarmā Māṇikya Bahādura Dharmadhurandhara Mahodaya, performed the inauguration of the temple together with Śrīla Prabhupāda on Śrī Gaura-janmotsava day, 1935. For the great service of building this temple, Śrīla Prabhupāda adorned Sakhīcaraṇa Rāya with the title of 'Śreṣṭa Ārya', the topmost Aryan.

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Māyāvāda kī Jīvanī

One day, when Ācārya Kesarī (Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja) was sitting with his disciples, he told us about a book he had written called *Māyāvāda kī Jīvanī*. "Śrīla Prabhupāda considered that Śaṅkara's philosophy would create many obstacles for the preaching of *śuddha-bhakti*, as long as it remained prevalent in this world. It is therefore extremely important to eradicate this philosophy. *Kevalādvaita-vāda*, the philosophy of monism, is refuted by literatures such as Śrīman Madhvācārya's *Anubhāṣya*, *Anuvyākhyān* and *Sūtra-bhāṣya*, Śrī Jayatīrtha's *Nyāya-sudhā* and *Tattva-prakāśika*, and Śrī Vyāsatīrtha's *Nyāyāmṛta*, which are great weapons, just like the Sudarśana *cakra*.

"These conclusions of Śrīla Prabhupāda deeply influenced my heart. In addition to these treatises, I collected ten or twelve more books on the Vedānta philosophy and studied them all from beginning to end with great concentration. These books show very clearly that the *nirākāra, niviśeṣa, nirguṇa brahma-vāda* or *māyāvāda* of Śaṅkara differs in all respects from the concepts of Śrīla Vedavyāsa, who wrote *Śrī Brahma-sūtra*, the commentary on Vedānta, and its natural commentary, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Nowhere in the five hundred and fifty aphorisms of *Brahma-sūtra* do we find words like *jñāna, nirākāra, niviśeṣa* or *nirguṇa*. *Nirguṇa brahma* can never be worthy of worship because it has no compassion. The *brahma* of *māyāvāda* is false and simply a figment of the imagination; it can never be real *brahma*. Consequently, Śrī Śaṅkarācārya's imaginary *nirviśeṣa brahma-vāda* or *māyāvāda* can never be identical with Śrī Vedavyāsa's *saviśeṣa brahma-vāda*. In *Śāṇḍilya-sūtra* (26), Śāṇḍilya Ṛṣi says, '*brahma-kāṇḍaṁ tu bhaktau tasyānu-jñānāya sāmānyāt* – the *Brahma-kāṇḍa* (*Brahma-sūtra*) specifically expounds *bhakti*, not *jñāna*.' In his *Bhakti-sūtra*, Śrī Nārada Ṛṣi also refers to Vedavyāsa, who compiled *Brahma-sūtra*, and to Śrī Śāṇḍilya Ṛṣi as authors of literature on *bhakti*, and he very clearly states that *Vyāsa-sūtra* (*Brahma-sūtra*) is a treatise on *bhakti*.

> "Śrī Śaṅkarācārya's imaginary *nirviśeṣa brahma-vāda* or *māyāvāda* can never be identical with Śrī Vedavyāsa's *saviśeṣa brahma-vāda*."

"When I was living in Māyāpura, Śrī Vidyābhūṣaṇa and Śrī Vidyāvinoda, who were the editors of the weekly magazine *Gauḍīya*, once came to me. They insisted that I write an essay on *māyāvāda* for a special issue of the *Gauḍīya*. Accordingly, I quickly wrote the essay *Māyāvāda kī Jīvanī* and presented it to them. Later on I found out that the essay was too long for the special issue, but that Prabhupāda had been extremely pleased to read it and wanted it to be published quickly as a small book. The essay was lost, however, during the confusion after Śrīla Prabhupāda's disappearance. Fortunately, it was found in 1942 in the house of Śrīyutā Uṣālatā-devī, a follower of Śrīla Prabhupāda, in the village of Caṁpāhāṭī. It will be published soon."

Later on it was published in the Bengali monthly, *Śrī Gauḍīya-patrikā*, and in the Hindi monthly, *Śrī Bhāgavata-patrikā*, and it has also been published as a book both in Bengali and in Hindi. The seventh part of this present book contains a special summary of the contents of *Māyāvāda kī Jīvanī*.

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Śrīla Prabhupāda enters aprakaṭa-līlā

Śrīla Prabhupāda travelled all over India and preached with scrupulous diligence until 1936. He gave *tridaṇḍa-sannyāsa* to exceptionally qualified *brahmacārīs* and *maṭha* residents, and through them started to preach pure *bhakti* everywhere, through *kṛṣṇa-nāma-saṅkīrtana*. He first established Śrī Caitanya Maṭha in Māyāpura, and after that, nine *maṭhas* on the nine islands of Navadvīpa, and approximately sixty-four preaching centres all over India. He published the daily newspaper *Nadīyā Prakāśa* and the weekly magazine *Gauḍīya* in Bengali, *The Harmonist* in English, *Bhāgavata* in Hindi, and other transcendental magazines as well. He also published *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and other devotional literature. Śrīla Prabhupāda sent his expert disciples *tridaṇḍi-svāmī* Śrīmad Bhakti Hṛdaya Bon Mahārāja and *tridaṇḍi-svāmī* Bhakti Pradīpa Tīrtha Mahārāja to the West. They brought Śrī Gaura's message to England, France, Germany and other countries. After they returned, Aprākṛta Bhakti Sāraṅga Prabhu was sent to the Western countries to continue the preaching. In this way, the dissemination of pure *bhakti* began with great enthusiasm.

> "Our ultimate aspiration is the dust of the lotus feet of the Vaiṣṇavas in the line of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī."

Amidst all this, in the beginning of 1936, Śrīla Prabhupāda began to display his pastime of ill health. Despite that, during that year he inaugurated a transcendental exhibition in Prayāga, delivered long lectures at Śrīvāsa-aṅgana in Māyāpura on the occasion of *śrī vyāsa-pūjā*, established deities in the new Suvarṇa-vihāra Maṭha, showered *hari-kathā* on Śrī Brahma Gauḍīya Maṭha in Ālālanātha on the occasion of Śrī Nṛsiṁha-caturdaśī, and observed *puruṣottama-vrata* in Puruṣottama-dhāma (Purī). Then he returned to the Kolkata Gauḍīya Maṭha.

During this period he often told everyone, "All of you should perform *bhajana* sincerely; there are not many days left now." Early in the morning, on the day he entered *aprakaṭa-līlā*, he gave the order to *tridaṇḍi-svāmī* Śrīmad Bhakti Rakṣaka Śrīdhara Gosvāmī Mahārāja to sing *Śrī Rūpa-mañjarī-pada*. Śrīla Prabhupāda praised Śrīpāda Narahari Brahmacārī Sevā-vigraha Prabhu, and told all his disciples that they should be honest like him, and that they should perform *hari-bhajana* without other ambitions. He then gave his last instruction to the disciples present:

"I have encouraged everyone to perform *bhajana* and to be indifferent to everything else. For this reason, some people are dissatisfied with me. But one day they will surely understand that I have said this only for the welfare of the world. All of you should enthusiastically preach together that *hari-kathā* which is in accordance with the mood of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī and Śrī Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī. Our ultimate aspiration is the dust of the lotus feet of the Vaiṣṇavas in the line of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī. You should stay together under the guidance of the *āśraya-vigraha* (*śrī guru*) to please the transcendental senses of *advaya-jñāna para-tattva* Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Yugala. You should proceed on the path of *hari-bhajana* with determination, and maintain your life in this material world only for the purpose of *hari-kathā*. Never give up *hari-bhajana*, even in the most difficult circumstances of countless

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calamities, insults and reproaches. Do not become discouraged to see that most people of the world do not accept the idea of pure service to Kṛṣṇa. Never give up your *bhajana*, your hearing and speaking *kṛṣṇa-kathā* – this is your everything. Always continue to perform *hari-kīrtana*, being *tṛṇād-api sunīca*, more humble than a blade of grass and more tolerant than a tree."

Having delivered these last instructions, Vārṣabhānavī-dayita dāsa Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda, the best of the followers of Svarūpa Dāmodara and Rūpa Gosvāmī, and Śrīmatī Rādhikā's Nayana-maṇi, entered the *niśānta-līlā* of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda in the last part of the night on 31 December 1936.

The news of Śrīla Prabhupāda's entering *aprakaṭa-līlā* (unmanifest pastimes) quickly spread not only throughout Bengal but throughout the whole of India. His initiated disciples started to lament loudly in profound grief. People assembled at Bāgbāzār Gauḍīya Maṭha from every direction, tormented by separation.

Some supposedly very dear disciples of Śrīla Prabhupāda wanted to cremate him at the Nīmtalā cremation *ghāṭa* in Kolkata. However, Śrī Vinoda-bihārī Brahmacārī, who was learned in *bhakti-siddhānta*, fervently opposed this proposal and said, "Let me see who has the power to cremate the transcendental body of our Prabhu. Śrīla Prabhupāda has clearly instructed us that his *samādhi* ceremony should be performed in his own dear *dhāma*, Śrī Māyāpura, at Śrī Caitanya Maṭha, which is non-different from Govardhana." When those present heard his words, they unanimously agreed with him, and Śrīla Prabhupāda's transcendental body was brought to Śrī Caitanya Maṭha in Śrī Dhāma Māyāpura on a



Śrīla Prabhupāda's *samādhi-mandira* at Śrī Caitanya Maṭha

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special train. There, on the bank of Rādhā-kuṇḍa, Śrī Vinoda-bihārī Brahmacārī and others selected the place of the *samādhi* and then performed the *samādhi* ceremony according to the rules of *Sat-kriyā-sāra-dīpikā* (a collection of Vaiṣṇava purificatory rituals). When the sacred rites of *samādhi* were completed, Śrī Vinoda-bihārī Brahmacārī, grief-stricken and weeping in separation from Śrīla Prabhupāda, fainted. Gradually his godbrothers were able to help him regain some degree of composure.

After this, some of Śrīla Prabhupāda's disciples wanted to perform his *śrāddha-saṁskāra* according to the *smārta* tradition. Again, Kṛtiratna Prabhu vehemently opposed this proposal. "According to the *smārta* doctrine," he said, "everyone becomes a ghost (*preta*) when they die. It is to deliver people from this ghostly condition that one has to perform their *preta-śrāddha*. However, according to Vaiṣṇava doctrine, the sins of a person who chants *nāmābhāsa* are destroyed, and he goes beyond birth and death, as we see in the examples of Ajāmila and others. The scriptures oppose the performance of *preta-śrāddha* for Vaiṣṇavas who have been devoted to one-pointed *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*, and who have chanted *śuddha-nāma* their whole lives.

"Śrīla Prabhupāda, the crown jewel of liberated souls, is an eternal associate of Kṛṣṇa. Not only that, he is *kṛṣṇa-priyā* Śrī Vārṣabhānavī's most beloved companion. Who will dare perform his *preta-śrāddha*? There is a fundamental difference between the *sātvata-śrāddha* of the Vaiṣṇavas and the *preta-śrāddha* of the *smārtas*. According to the *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*, *Sat-kriyā-sāra-dīpikā* and other Vaiṣṇava scriptures, the only *sātvata-śrāddha* for Vaiṣṇavas is the offering of *bhagavat-mahā-prasāda*. The observance of *viraha-mahotsava* for Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* has been going on since ancient times, and accordingly we will present our *śraddhā-puṣpāñjali* to Śrīla Prabhupāda's lotus feet."

> **"Let me see who has the power to cremate the transcendental body of our Prabhu. Śrīla Prabhupāda has clearly instructed us that his *samādhi* ceremony should be performed in his own dear *dhāma*, Śrī Māyāpura, at Śrī Caitanya Maṭha, which is non-different from Govardhana."**

All of Śrīla Prabhupāda's disciples were stunned when they heard his lion-like voice. In the end, everyone unanimously approved his views and completed the *viraha-mahotsava* in the manner he proposed. The following is a portion of Kṛtiratna Prabhu's lecture at Śrīla Prabhupāda's *viraha-sabhā*.

"Bhagavān has no birth or death, and similarly His associates, the liberated *mahāpuruṣas*, also have no birth or death. Their bodies are composed of eternity, knowledge and bliss (*sac-cid-ānanda-maya*), and there is no difference between their body and their soul. Therefore, their apparent appearance and disappearance is only for the welfare of the world. People who are ignorant of *tattva*, however, cannot realize this. *Jagad-guru* Śrīla Prabhupāda is an eternal associate of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in His pastimes and he has appeared here only for the welfare of

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Śrīla Prabhupāda's *samādhi-mūrti*

the world. In a short time he preached *śuddha-bhakti* throughout the whole world for the welfare of all. Now he has entered the eternal *niśānta-līlā* of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and, being present in *aprakaṭa-līlā* (Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa's unmanifest pastimes), he is still bestowing great auspiciousness to the world. Only those who are endowed with gross intelligence and who are shackled by ritual can imagine performing the worldly *smārta-śrāddha* of such a *mahāpuruṣa*. His disappearance has the same meaning as his appearance. Because of this, we can remember our feelings of separation from the *mahāpuruṣas* on their appearance days and celebrate meeting on their disappearance days.

"Some want to install Śrīla Prabhupāda's *śrī vigraha*, his sacred body, in *śrī mandira* according to the *pāñcarātrika* system, and others have different proposals. They are all correct according to their own qualification. But for the servants who have the topmost *guru-niṣṭhā*, the best service is to preach the innermost desire of Śrī Gurupāda-padma. Mahāprabhu's innermost desire, which is also Śrīla Prabhupāda's, is to preach *vaikuṇṭha-nāma* and *vaikuṇṭha-kathā* everywhere in the world.

"His disappearance has the same meaning as his appearance. Because of this, we can remember our feelings of separation from the *mahāpuruṣas* on their appearance days and celebrate meeting on their disappearance days."

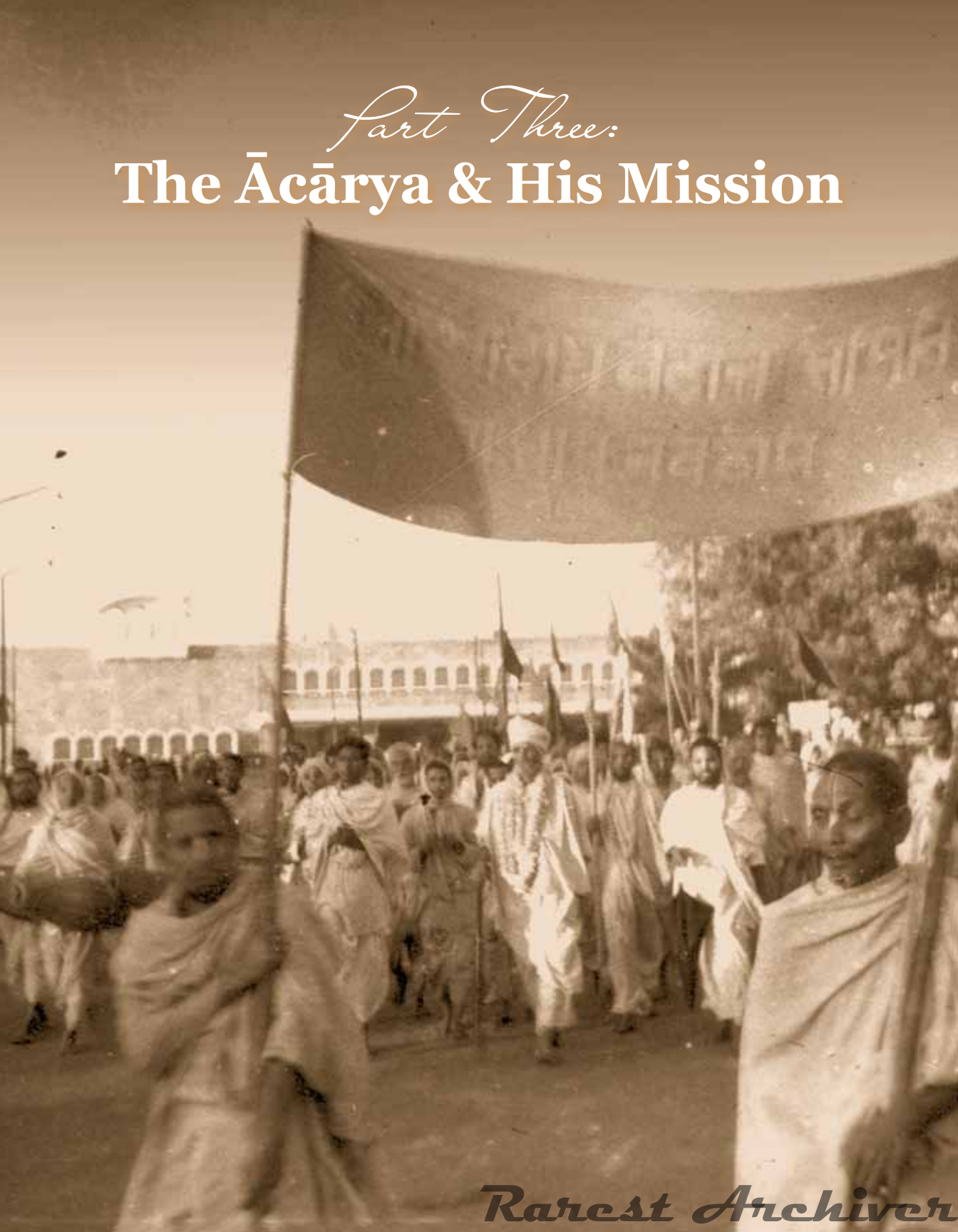
"The sacred body of Śrīla Prabhupāda is *sac-cid-ānanda-maya*. His birth, death, etc., are only a play on the worldly stage for our gross vision, and his eternal form remains intact and unchanged throughout. If there is no meeting, the intense and dire suffering of separation will not end. Therefore, after Śrīla Prabhupāda entered *aprakaṭa-līlā*, he instantly displayed *prakaṭa-līlā* to bestow mercy on his dependent disciples and to console the devotees grief-stricken in separation from him. How did he do this? After a short time, being decorated with various kinds of flowers, garlands, sandal paste, etc., as one of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Madana-mohana's most beloveds, he became eternally present in *samādhi* in Sevā-kuñja on the banks of Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa in Śrī Dhāma Māyāpura, to give instructions on serving the Divine Couple under his guidance."

At this assembly in which his disappearance festival was observed, many subjects were discussed, such as Śrīla Prabhupāda's transcendental body, the reasons for his entering *aprakaṭa-līlā*, the *ācārya's bhakta-vātsalya* (parental kindness to the devotees) and the appearance of the *ācārya* in a holy place.

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Part Three:

The Ācārya & His Mission



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General superintendent of the Gauḍīya Maṭha and Mission

After Śrīla Prabhupāda entered *aprakaṭa-līlā*, a governing committee was formed to oversee the Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha and Mission. *Mahā-mahopadeśaka* Śrīpāda Nārāyaṇa dāsa Adhikārī Bhakti-sudhākara Bhakti-śāstrī was appointed the committee secretary and Śrīpāda Vinoda-bihārī Brahmacārī Kṛtiratna the general superintendent. For some time all the activities of the *maṭha* and mission were carried out enthusiastically, and the preaching of *śuddha-bhakti* continued everywhere, just like before. However, after some time the chairman of the governing committee, who was also the *ācārya*, abandoned the behaviour and ethics of the *rūpānugas*, the followers of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, and engaged unrestrictedly in practices unfavourable to *bhakti*. This deviation led to chaos throughout the mission. It was a dark period for the Sārasvata Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas. Some *maṭha* residents returned to their *gṛhastha* life due to this. Many left Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha to establish their own *āśramas*, *maṭhas* and so forth, and continued their *sādhana-bhajana* there. The publishing of *bhakti* literature, including the daily, weekly and monthly magazines in different languages, stopped. Gradually preaching activities, Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma *parikramā*, *kārtika-vrata*, *śrī vyāsa-pūjā* and other observances also stopped.

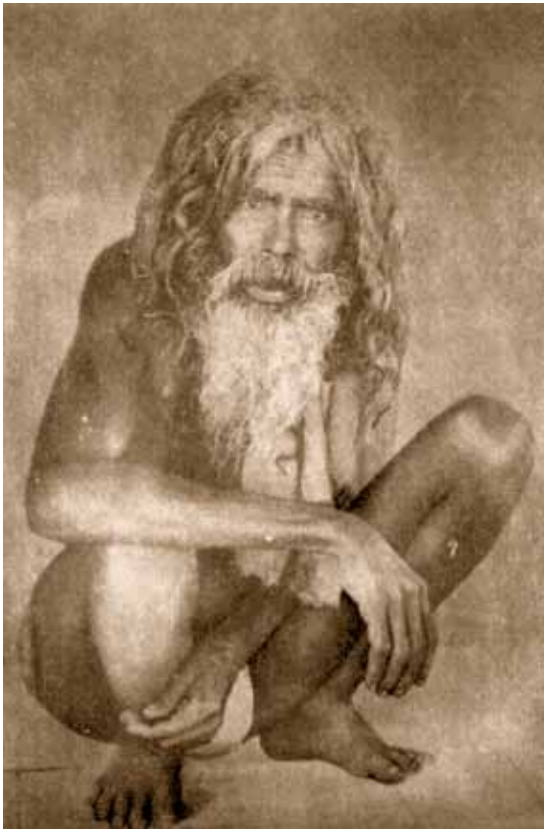
Under these circumstances, Śrī Vinoda-bihārī Brahmacārī Kṛtiratna Prabhu left Māyāpura for Navadvīpa town with some of his godbrothers, such as *pūjyapāda* Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣaka Śrīdhara Mahārāja, Śrīpāda Narahari Brahmacārī Sevā-vigraha, Śrī Mahānanda Brahmacārī Sevā-niketana, Śrī Vīracanda Brahmacārī and Śrī Narottamānanda Brahmacārī Bhakti-kamala Prabhu. They rented a house in Tegharīpāḍā and established Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha. From there, they began to preach *śuddha-bhakti*.

Obtaining the mercy of Śrīla Vaṁśīdāsa Bābājī Mahārāja

In those days, *bhajanānandī* Śrīla Vaṁśīdāsa Bābājī Mahārāja was performing *bhajana* in a solitary place on the bank of the sacred Gaṅgā near Navadvīpa town in Koladvīpa. Bābājī Mahārāja was always absorbed in serving Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda in his heart, with deep, transcendental emotion (*bhāva-mayī sevā*). He also performed *bhāva-mayī sevā* to his Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nityānanda deities, with whom he would sometimes have loving quarrels (*prema-kalaha*). It is extremely difficult even for prominent *mahātmās* to understand Śrīla Vaṁśīdāsa's strange behaviour, which resulted from his inner *bhāvas*. Śrīla Sarasvatī Prabhupāda was acquainted with this *mahātmā* through Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura.

Śrīla Vaṁśīdāsa Bābājī Mahārāja used to chase away many people who came for his *darśana*, insulting them with abusive language. From time

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Śrīla Vaṁśīdāsa Bābājī Mahārāja

> "It is not advisable for common people to imitate *mahāpuruṣas*, who are endowed with transcendental power. Our duty is to constantly practise their instructions, which bring auspiciousness to the *jīvas*."

to time he would keep fish bones and other dirty things near his *bhajana-kuṭīra* so that the public would think he was fallen. In this way he kept bad association at a distance. Such people were thus deprived of his *darśana* and pure *hari-kathā*, but he affectionately instructed the faithful who were inclined towards *bhajana* and averse to worldly things.

Once, Śrī Vinoda-bihārī Brahmacārī Kṛtiratna Prabhu went to the *bhajana-kuṭīra* of Śrī Bābājī, who seated Vinoda next to him with great respect. Śrī Bābājī had a special affection for the disciples of his intimate friend and best of godbrothers, Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda. Śrīpāda Kṛtiratna Prabhu noticed that Bābājī was frying eggplant on a griddle and turning the pieces over with his hand. When he asked Bābājī if a spatula should not be used, Bābājī gave the answer, "Let me see what Nitāī-Gaura are doing." His renunciation and uncommon activities were very astonishing.

Sometimes, to deceive the public, Bābājī would prepare a hookah with tobacco, and say, "Today no fire, today no tobacco." Nonetheless, he used to keep the hookah in front of his Śrī Gaura-Nitāī deities and ask Them to make it *prasāda*. Then immediately he would get the answer and say, "My Gaura-Nitāī do not smoke tobacco." It is extremely difficult for ordinary people to understand what kind of *bhāva* is arising and when, in the heart of a transcendental *mahājana*.

One day Kṛtiratna Prabhu brought his intimate friend Śrī Narahari Prabhu to have *darśana* of Bābājī. They saw that the distribution of tea *prasāda* was going on. Śrī Kṛtiratna Prabhu told Śrī Narahari Prabhu, "If we take this

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prasāda, we will go to hell. Bābājī Mahārāja is like Nīlakaṇṭha Mahādeva (Lord Śiva); only he can digest this. We ordinary people will die if we take this. *'Tejīyaṣāṁ na doṣāya vahneḥ sarva-bhujo yathā.'*[1] It is not advisable for common people to imitate *mahāpuruṣas*, who are endowed with transcendental power. Our duty is to constantly practise their instructions, which bring auspiciousness to the *jīvas*."

Another day, Śrī Kṛtiratna Prabhu saw Bābājī Mahārāja in his *bhajana-kuṭī* deeply absorbed in *bhajana*. Many devotees who were taking his *darśana* were also offering donations, and one of them started to gather up the coins. Bābābjī at once scolded him, saying, "*Tho, paisā tho. Jekhānakāra paisā sekhāna tho. Utpātera kauḍī citpāte jaya* – Don't touch the money. Leave it wherever it is. Corrupt money is the reason one falls down." All the actions of a *mahāpuruṣa* are for the welfare of the world, and their instructions are extremely important for true practitioners of *bhakti*. Those who act in accordance with their instructions will gradually progress in *bhajana*. Their lives will become blissful and they will achieve perfection in their *sādhana-bhajana*.

On one occasion, a new *tridaṇḍī-sannyāsī* arrived to take Bābājī's *darśana*. Seeing him offering his *praṇāma*, Bābājī said, "Fresh bamboo wrapped in cloth does not constitute a *daṇḍa*, and one does not become a *tridaṇḍī* by holding it. The significance of carrying a *tridaṇḍa* is to utilize the body, mind and words completely in the service of Bhagavān." The new *sannyāsī* was very simple and could extract the essence of the instruction. He became very happy when he heard Bābājī's words and said: "*Ki kāj sannyāse, mora prema–prayojana, dāsa kari' vetana mora deha prema-dhana* – What is the need of my *sannyāsa*? My goal is to achieve *prema*. Please make me your servant and give me the wealth of *prema* as my salary."

Another time, a few devotees came to Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja for his *darśana*. They offered reverential greetings at his lotus feet, and with great respect started singing, '*je ānila prema-dhana karuṇā pracura*', a song composed by Śrī Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura. At the end of the *kīrtana* they repeated the last lines again and again – '*pāṣāṇe kuṭībo māthā, anale paśibo, gaurāṅga guṇera nidhi kothā gele pābo*'. This *viraha-kīrtana* is filled with lamentation. The purport is as follows: "Where has Śacīnandana Śrī Gaurahari gone – He who, by His causeless mercy, freely and indiscriminately distributed here on earth *kṛṣṇa-prema*, which is difficult even for Brahmā, Śiva and others to attain? Where are His associates such as Śrīla Advaita Ācārya, Svarūpa Dāmodara, Rāya Rāmānanda, Śrī Rūpa and Śrī Raghunātha? Without them I cannot stay alive. Where will I go? Where will I obtain the dust from their lotus feet? If I cannot get their *darśana*, I will smash my head on a stone or enter into burning fire."

After hearing this *kīrtana*, Bābājī Mahārāja stood up and said, "You sang a song, only. Whose heart is torn apart? You have no idea of his heart. When the author wrote this *kīrtana*, he was deeply experiencing the pain of separation. Have you endeavoured to attain that? How can feelings of separation come before meeting? Has *sambandha-jñāna* appeared in your heart?"

It cannot be said whether or not the devotees performing the *kīrtana* understood the significance of Śrī Bābājī's words, nevertheless, the purport of those words was sublime.

1 Editor: "Spiritually powerful personalities are not harmed by apparent moral transgression. They are like fire, which devours everything and remains pure" (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.33.29).

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Foundation of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti

After establishing Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha in Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma, Śrī Kṛtiratna Prabhu began to consider how to best re-establish the service that would fulfil the innermost desire (*mano-'bhīṣṭa sevā*) of his most worshipful Śrīla Prabhupāda. It was crucial to re-institute the publishing of Śrīla Prabhupāda's transcendental magazines and devotional literature. Without this, the world would be bereft of auspiciousness. Indeed, this was the way to serve his innermost desire. Śrī Kṛtiratna Prabhu thought, "The devotees dependent on Śrīla Prabhupāda's lotus feet are now roaming here and there, uncertain of what to do because they have no place in Caitanya Maṭha. Our sole duty is to organize them and again preach Śrīla Prabhupāda's instructions far and wide with the same enthusiasm as before." With this aim in mind, he rented a house at 32/2 Bospāḍā Lane, in Bāgbāzār, Kolkata, and also bought a small press. After a short time, Śrī Triguṇanātha Mukharjī Mahodaya donated his business, Gaurāṅga Printing Works, to him. Encouraged by this, Kṛtiratna Prabhu began printing devotional literature. Unfortunately, when thirty-two pages of *Śikṣā-daśamūlam* were composed, the complete manuscript was stolen. Despite the setback, Śrī Kṛtiratna Prabhu did not become discouraged.

Śrī Kṛtiratna Prabhu and some of his godbrothers established Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti in that rented house in Bāgbāzār, on the auspicious day of Akṣaya-tṛtīyā in the month of Vaiśākha (April–May) 1940. Among the godbrothers who were present were Śrī Abhaya Caraṇa Bhaktivedānta Prabhu (later Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja)[2], Śrī Nṛsiṁhānanda Brahmacārī and Śrī Sajjana-sevaka Brahmacārī (Śrīla Gurupāda-padma's *dīkṣā* disciple, now Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Mahārāja, the present *ācārya* and president of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti [at the time of writing]).

In his lectures, Śrī Gurupāda-padma often mentioned his internal mood when he named the Samiti. It reflected his understanding that to nurture transcendental life it is absolutely necessary to adopt the pure teachings of the *mahājanas*. These pure teachings were presented by Śrī Vedavyāsajī, who compiled *Vedānta-sūtra* for the ultimate welfare of the *jīvas*. The Vedānta is the distillation of the Upaniṣads, which are in turn the essence of the Vedas. There are more than eleven hundred Upaniṣads, and their established subject is the worship of *sarva-śaktimān*, the possessor of all potencies and the shelter of all transcendental qualities, who is the blissful *para-brahma*. In other words, the Upaniṣads teach the practice of *bhakti*. Only through this practice can the *jīva* become forever free from birth, death and the threefold miseries, and attain the loving service of the supremely blissful complete Reality (*pūrṇa-brahma*), Śrī Kṛṣṇa. All the *mantras* really have one meaning, although some seem to be contradictory. The omniscient Śrī Vedavyāsa composed five hundred and fifty *sūtras*, or aphorisms, to clarify the very deep and difficult philosophical conclusions of the Upaniṣads. These *sūtras* are variously known as *Brahma-sūtra*, *Vedānta-sūtra* or *Śārīraka-sūtra*. Another name is *Bhakti-sūtra*.

Our Indian *ācāryas* have written commentaries on *Vedānta-sūtra* according to their particular bias, in order to strengthen their own doctrines. The omniscient Vedavyāsa understood that this would happen in the future. Accordingly, he wrote his own commentary on these *sūtras*, and

2 Editor: see Appendix page 393

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this is known as *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. He has clearly confirmed this in his Purāṇas:

artho 'yaṁ brahma-sūtrāṇāṁ
bhāratārtha-vinirṇayaḥ
gāyatrī-bhāṣya-rūpo 'sau
vedārtha-paribṛṁhitaḥ

Garuḍa Purāṇa

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam explains the meaning of *Brahma-sūtra* and is the purport of the *Mahābhārata*. It is also the commentary on *gāyatrī* and the essence and explanation of all the Vedas.

sarva-vedānta-sāraṁ hi
śrīmad-bhāgavatam-iṣyate
tad-rasāmṛta-tṛptasya
nānyatra syād ratiḥ kvacit

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (12.13.15)

The essence of all the Vedas is *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Whoever has tasted the nectar of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is fully satiated and cannot be attracted to any other Purāṇa or *śāstra*.

In *Vedānta-sūtra*, Śrī Vedavyāsa has clearly established *bhagavad-bhakti*, loving devotion to Bhagavān, through *sūtras* such as *ānandamayo 'bhyāsāt*, *api saṁrādhane pratyakṣānumānābhyām* and *anāvṛttiḥ śabdād anāvṛttiḥ śabdāt*. Additionally, in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, which is the commentary on Vedānta, *bhakti* is established through verses such as *sa vai puṁsāṁ paro dharmo yato bhaktir adhokṣaje* (1.2.6), *mayi bhaktir hi bhūtānām amṛtatvāya kalpate* (10.82.44), *yasyāṁ vai śrūyamāṇāyāṁ kṛṣṇe parama-puruṣe, bhaktirutpadyate* (1.7.7) and *bhaktyāham ekayā grāhyaḥ* (11.14.21). Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī, the crown jewel of those learned in Vedānta, and *gauḍīya-vedāntācārya* Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa have used scriptural evidence and irrefutable arguments to prove that the subject established in *Vedānta-sūtra* is *bhakti* and *bhakti* alone.

Some modern learned persons have tried to prove that Vedānta establishes *jñāna* and *mukti*, but this attempt is based on pure imagination. Actually, the words *jñāna* and *mukti* are not mentioned anywhere in the five hundred and fifty *sūtras* of *Vedānta-sūtra*. According to *vaiṣṇavānāṁ yathā śambhuḥ* [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 12.13.16] Ācārya Śaṅkara (an expansion of Lord Śiva) is a supreme Vaiṣṇava, but, for some special reason he preached *kevalādvaita-vāda*, or *māyāvāda*, a false doctrine which is opposed to *śāstra*.

This society was named Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti in order for it to strongly preach throughout the world this deep secret regarding *bhakti* for the welfare of all the *jīvas*.

Complete dependence on Bhagavān

Śrī Kṛtiratna Prabhu was a fully *akiñcana* and *niṣkiñcana* Vaiṣṇava.[3] Throughout his life he acted only for the pleasure of Kṛṣṇa, and never collected one *paisā* for his own happiness or self-interest, having full trust in Śrī Gurudeva and his worshipful Lord. Therefore, when he left Śrī Dhāma Māyāpura he was empty-handed. Many godbrothers, also completely penniless, joined him in the new Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti

3 Editor: *Akiñcana* – a devotee who is free from possessiveness and is not eager to enjoy or renounce anything, since he considers everything to be Śrī Kṛṣṇa's property. *Niṣkiñcana* – one who is free from all material possessions; a renunciant.

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maṭha at Bospāḍā Lane. They were devoted to *sādhana-bhajana*, and somehow their lives were maintained by the mercy of Bhagavān.

One Ekādaśī morning, Śrī Kṛtiratna Prabhu was chanting *śrī harināma*, his grave face revealing his absorption in a profound mood. Just then, a *brahmacārī* brought the news that his godbrother Śrīpāda Nārāyaṇa Mukharjī had come to meet with him. Śrīla Gurudeva instructed the *brahmacārī* to seat their guest respectfully. It was natural for Kṛtiratna Prabhu to honour guests, but on this day, he did not have even a *paisā* with which to serve his godbrother, and this disturbed him. Just then, by divine desire, he noticed a chirping sparrow flying from the house to its nest and back again. Suddenly, the bird dropped from its beak a small packet, which clanged as it hit the ground close to Kṛtiratna Prabhu. Out of curiosity he opened the small packet and was happy to find six-and-a-half *annas* [one *anna* equals one sixteenth of a rupee] inside. With this money he was able to buy fruits and sweets, offer them to Bhagavān, and thus serve his godbrother. Śrīpāda Nārāyaṇa Mukharjī became most pleased by his godbrother's affectionate behaviour, and they soon began *prema-mayī hari-kathā*, a discussion on divine love for Śrī Hari.

At that time, the postman brought Śrī Vinoda-bihārī Prabhu a money order for one hundred rupees from his godbrother and good friend *tridaṇḍi-svāmī* Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Sarvasva Giri Mahārāja of Kānpura. Kṛtiratna Prabhu's eyes overflowed with tears as he recognized the causeless mercy of Śrī Gurudeva and Bhagavān. Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa says in *Bhagavad-gītā* 9.22 that He will Himself carry the burden of the maintenance and protection of those single-pointed devotees who exclusively meditate upon His transcendental form and who worship Him with devotional sentiments:

ananyāś cintayanto māṁ
ye janāḥ paryupāsate
teṣāṁ nityābhiyuktānāṁ
yoga-kṣemaṁ vahāmy aham

Why, then, will the Supreme Lord not fulfil the desire of a devotee who is completely dependent upon Him, loving with guests, protective of dependents and endowed with ideal *guru-niṣṭhā*? Can Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the ocean of compassion, not make His name 'Bhakta-vatsala' (brimming with affection for His devotees) meaningful by sending money through a small bird?

Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Sarvasva Giri Mahārāja

It would not be out of place to introduce Śrīmad Bhakti Sarvasva Giri Mahārāja at this point. He was one of the foremost of Śrīla Prabhupāda's *dīkṣā* and *sannyāsī* disciples. A *brahmacārī* from boyhood, he was soft-spoken, simple, honest and endowed with other qualities befitting a Vaiṣṇava. Notably, he was an influential speaker in Hindi, Bengali and English. He impressed everyone, common men as well as educated and respectable people, including governors and chief ministers from many states. One of his main strengths was his ability to create faith in *śrī harināma* and *bhakti* in the community at large by cultivating friendly relationships. He preached *bhakti* in Mumbai, Pune, Kolhāpura, Kānpura and other prominent cities of India, as well as outside India in Rangoon [in Burma] and other places. In accordance with Śrīla Prabhupāda's desire, during a special session of the Navadvīpa-dhāma Pracāriṇī Sabhā, Śrīmad Bhakti Sarvasva Giri Mahārāja was praised for his outstanding Vaiṣṇava qualities.

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Accepting sannyāsa

After the establishment of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti, the scholar in Vedānta, *mahopadeśaka* Śrī Kṛtiratna Prabhu started to travel throughout Bengal and prominent cities of India to preach *śuddha-bhakti* and *śrī nāma*. Śrī Śyāmānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha in Medinīpura (Bengal) was established on Śrī Kṛṣṇa-janmāṣṭamī 1940. The leading *sannyāsīs* and *brahmacārīs* present included Śrīpāda Bhakti Rakṣaka Śrīdhara Mahārāja, Śrīpāda Bhakti Bhūdeva Śrautī Mahārāja, Śrīpāda Bhakti Vicāra Yāyāvara Mahārāja, Śrīpāda Aprākṛta Bhakti-sāraṅga Gosvāmī, Śrīpāda Vinoda-bihārī Kṛtiratna Prabhu, *mahopadeśaka* Śrīpāda Hayagrīva Brahmacārī, Śrīpāda Svādhikārānanda Brahmacārī, Śrīpāda Bhūtabhṛta Brahmacārī and Śrīpāda Rādhā-Ramaṇa Brahmacārī (later, Śrīmad Bhakti Kumuda Santa Mahārāja). Hundreds of *maṭha* residents also participated in the celebration. About ten thousand pious people attended the festival. At this gathering, a plan was presented to protect Śrīla Prabhupāda's *bhakti-dhārā* and an outline of the future preaching of *bhakti*. In addition, it was announced that there would be a Vraja-maṇḍala *parikramā* on foot during the observance of the Kārtika vow the following year. After this Janmāṣṭamī festival, Śrī Kṛtiratna Prabhu started to preach in Uttar Pradesh and in areas of Eastern Bengal.

At this time, during the last part of the night, Śrī Kṛtiratna Prabhu dreamed that Śrīla Prabhupāda laid his hand on his right shoulder and spoke to him in a grave voice: "Until now you have not taken *sannyāsa*. Today I am giving you *sannyāsa*." The complete *sannyāsa* ceremony then took place in his dream. When it was over, Śrīla Prabhupāda instructed Śrīmad Bhakti Sāraṅga Gosvāmī Mahārāja to call out "Keśava Mahārāja *kī jaya*!" The *jaya-dhvani* was so loud that Kṛtiratna Prabhu woke up. He told his senior godbrothers about the dream and they were elated to find 'Keśava' among the one hundred and eight *sannyāsa* names.

When Śrīla Prabhupāda had been personally present, he had on several occasions expressed his desire to give *sannyāsa* to his intimate, dear servant, Śrī Vinoda-bihārī Brahmacārī. He used to say, "Vinoda is *sannyāsī* by body, mind and words. It only remains to change his outer dress." On one occasion, Śrīla Prabhupāda had desired to give him *sannyāsa*. *Ḍor-kaupīna* (loin-cloth), *daṇḍa* and all the requirements were prepared and all the arrangements were completed, but Śrīpāda Kuñja-bihārī Vidyābhūṣaṇa Prabhu, who was the secretary of the Gauḍīya Mission, made a humble submission at the lotus feet of Śrīla Prabhupāda: "If Śrī Vinoda-bihārī is given *sannyāsa* now, it will jeopardize the protection of the *maṭha* and mission. Please, postpone his *sannyāsa*." Because of that intervention, Śrī Vinoda-bihārī was not given *sannyāsa*. On another occasion, the arrangement for Vinoda-bihārī's *sannyāsa* was made again at the Bāgbāzār Gauḍīya Maṭha. This time, due to the special petition of Bhāgavata-ratna Prabhu, Śrīla Prabhupāda did not award *sannyāsa*. On a third occasion, Śrīla Prabhupāda came to Vinoda-bihārī in a dream and ordered him to take *sannyāsa*: "Vinoda, because you have not yet taken *sannyāsa*, my entire preaching work is being ruined." Finally, for the fourth time, Śrīla Prabhupāda instructed him to take *sannyāsa*, again in a dream, and Kṛtiratna Prabhu actually saw himself accepting *sannyāsa* from him. Kṛtiratna Prabhu took this matter very seriously and vowed to accept the renounced order of life

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"Thus the *sannyāsa* dress and *sannyāsa* name given by Śrīla Prabhupāda in the dream became a complete reality."

on the upcoming holy day of Bhādra-pūrṇimā in Kaṭvā, where Śrī Mahāprabhu accepted *sannyāsa*.

Accordingly, on Pūrṇimā, Śrī Vinoda-bihārī Brahmacārī accepted *sannyāsa* in Kaṭvā, from Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda's dear disciple, Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣaka Śrīdhara Gosvāmī, the transcendental writer, poet and philosopher, in accordance with the *pāñcarātrika* method as described in *Saṁskāra-dīpikā*. His *sannyāsa* name was then announced: *tridaṇḍi-svāmī* Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja. *Pūjyapāda* Śrīmad Bhakti Bhūdeva Śrautī Mahārāja performed the priestly duties and instructed the *brahmacārī* how to put on the *kaupīna* and outer cloth. And Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja recited the *sannyāsa-mantra*. Thus the *sannyāsa* dress and *sannyāsa* name given by Śrīla Prabhupāda in the dream became a complete reality.

Many of Śrīla Gurudeva's *sannyāsī* and *brahmacārī* godbrothers were present for the ceremony that day in Śrī Kaṭvā-dhāma. The entire responsibility for the expenses of the great festival was borne by Śrī Vinayabhūṣaṇa Banarjī Bhakti-ketana Mahodaya, a disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda. In the evening, everyone returned to Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha.

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Preaching in Bengal

When the personification of mercy, Śacīnandana Śrī Gaurahari, sent Śrīla Rūpa and Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmīs to Śrī Dhāma Vṛndāvana, He instructed them to fulfil His innermost desires by composing *bhakti* literature, by explaining the regulations for Vaiṣṇava procedures and conduct (*vaiṣṇava-smṛti*), by restoring lost pastime places of Kṛṣṇa in Vraja, and by establishing service to deities of the Lord.

Śrī Rūpa, Śrī Sanātana and the other Gosvāmīs completely fulfilled Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's inner desire. They composed *Śrī Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta*, *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, *Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi*, the Ṣaḍ-sandarbhas and other authentic *bhakti* literature. They also composed *vaiṣṇava-smṛtis* like *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*, *Sat-kriyā-sāra-dīpikā* and *Saṁskāra-dīpikā* delineating proper conduct for Vaiṣṇavas. They re-established all the places of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes in the twelve primary forests, the secondary forests and others.

They established temples for Śrī Madana-mohana, Śrī Govindajī, Śrī Gopīnāthajī, Śrī Rādhā-Ramaṇajī, Śrī Gopeśvara Mahādeva, Śrī Rādhā-Dāmodara and Śrī Rādhā-Vinoda in Śrī Dhāma Vṛndāvana, for Kāmeśvara Mahādeva in Kāmyavana and for other deities as well. Thus the Gosvāmīs fulfilled Śrīman Mahāprabhu's innermost desire.

In the same way, *jagad-guru* Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda fulfilled the innermost desire of Śrī Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. He established a printing press (*bṛhad-mṛdaṅga*) for publishing and distributing *bhakti* literature to spread the message of Śrī Gaurasundara. He revived Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma *parikramā* and restored lost places of pilgrimage. He also protected and encouraged proper conduct in *bhakti*. Thus, by these and other projects, he fulfilled his *gurudeva's* innermost desire.

In the same way, after him, *tridaṇḍī-yati* Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, Śrīla Prabhupāda's dear and intimate disciple, fulfilled Śrīla Prabhupāda's innermost desires. After Śrīla Prabhupāda's departure from this world, Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma *parikramā*, the publishing of *bhakti* literature, the accepting of *tridaṇḍa-sannyāsa* and other activities in this line almost disappeared. But Ācārya Kesarī [Śrī Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Mahārāja] again propagated *bhakti* throughout the world with his broad expertise and strong preaching.

With irrepressible enthusiasm, *oṁ viṣṇupāda* Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja devoted himself to serving Śrīla Prabhupāda's innermost desire to preach Śrī Gaurasundara's message of *śuddha-bhakti* everywhere. He began by arranging large religious assemblies, with recitation of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, lectures and so forth in Candana-nagara, Vaidyavāṭī, Sevaḍāphulī, Śrī Rāmapura and other nearby towns on the holy banks of the Bhagavatī Bhāgīrathī. The chairmen of the municipality, as well as well-known lawyers, judges and respected members of the community, started to cooperate with great respect. After attentively hearing Śrīla Gurudeva's lectures with great veneration, these people became so impressed they asked him to establish Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭhas in their different districts.

In Chuṅchurā, a town very close to Kolkata, faithful local gentlemen strongly desired that Śrīla Gurudeva should establish a Gauḍīya Maṭha in a temple named 'Śrīvāsa-Mahāprabhura Vāṭī',

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which they were willing to donate without terms and conditions. The ancient deities of that temple had once been worshipped by Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita, an associate of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Śrīla Gurudeva could not turn down this offer. In April 1943, he accepted this temple and established Śrī Uddhāraṇa Gauḍīya Maṭha. Even today, the worship of those deities is continuing according to Vaiṣṇava tradition. The main office of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti and the Gauḍīya Printing Press were relocated to this *maṭha* from Bospāḍā Lane. Śrīla Gurupāda-padma based himself at the Chuṅchurā *maṭha* along with some of his godbrothers and *brahmacārīs*, and from there began travelling extensively to preach *śuddha-bhakti*.



The ancient deities in Śrī Uddhāraṇa Gauḍīya Maṭha

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Re-establishment of Śrī Dhāma Navadvīpa parikramā



Due to the expansive preaching of *bhakti*, an increasing number of faithful and virtuous people were now becoming attracted to Ācārya Kesarī. Many *gṛhastha* disciples of Śrīla Prabhupāda had been disturbed by the bad behaviour and impious activities of the managers of the Gauḍīya Maṭha at the time. Gradually, many of them became drawn by Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja's sweet manner and his strong preaching of *śuddha-bhakti*. They started to perform *bhajana* again with new enthusiasm. Aiming at this resurgence of interest, in 1942 Śrīla Gurudeva again started the weeklong Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma *parikramā* and festival to commemorate the appearance of Śrī Gaurasundara. The enthusiasm of the members of the Samiti was amplified by the participation of many pious people, *tyāgīs*, *brahmacārīs*, *sannyāsīs* and *gṛhastha* Vaiṣṇavas.



Devotees assembled for hearing *hari-kathā*

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The main purpose of festivals such as Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma *parikramā* is to give an opportunity for the inhabitants of the world to obtain *śuddha sat-saṅga*, the pure association of saintly persons. Through this *sat-saṅga*, one has a golden opportunity to nourish various aspects of *bhakti*. These include hearing *śuddha hari-kathā* (pure topics pertaining to the Lord); abstaining from alcohol, meat and other prohibited food; having *darśana* of the deity of Śrī Bhagavān and of His pastime places; and hearing and chanting the glories of those places in good association. In addition, one is afforded an unparalleled opportunity to serve Śrī Hari, Guru and Vaiṣṇavas. In *Navadvīpa-dhāma-māhātmya*, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura writes that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Nityānanda Prabhu fulfil all the cherished desires and give permanent engagement in *prema-mayī sevā*, the loving service of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Yugala, to those who complete the sixteen *kosa* Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma *parikramā* and take *darśana* of Śrī Dhāma Māyāpura under the guidance of Vaiṣṇavas.



Devotees honouring *prasāda* during *parikramā*

Manifestation of ācārya-līlā

A year later, in March 1943, the weeklong Śrī Dhāma *parikramā* and Śrī Gaura-janmotsava culminated in huge celebrations at Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha in Navadvīpa. The number of *sannyāsīs, brahmacārīs* and *gṛhastha* devotees had increased considerably from the previous year. The Śrī Dhāma *parikramā* ended with wonderful enthusiasm as Śrīman Mahāprabhu's palanquin returned with a splendid *saṅkīrtana* festival. This time, on repeated requests from his godbrothers, Ācārya Kesarī manifested his *ācārya-līlā* on the day of Śrī Gaura-janmotsava by giving *harināma* initiation to Śrī Rādhānātha Kumāra, Śrīmatī Mānadā Sundarī (of Variśāla) and Śrīmatī Hemāṅginī-devī. Later, after Śrī Rādhānātha Kumāra accepted *sannyāsa*, he was to become known as *tridaṇḍi-svāmī* Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Trivikrama Mahārāja.

After Śrī Dhāma *parikramā*, Śrīla Gurudeva travelled and preached *śuddha-bhakti*. He observed *dāmodara-vrata* (vows undertaken in the month of Kārtika) in Śrī Uddhāraṇa Gauḍīya Maṭha, Chuṅchurā. Then he spent some time at Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha. This was followed by a tour of East Bengal, where he preached along with Dr. Kṛṣṇapada Vrajavāsī, Sajjana-sevaka Brahmacārī and other *maṭha* residents.

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Śrī Śrī Jagannātha-deva's snāna-yātrā and ratha-yātrā in Śrī Uddhāraṇa Gauḍīya Maṭha, Chuṅchurā

On Tuesday, 6 June 1944, the *snāna-yātrā* of Śrī Jagannātha-deva took place in Śrī Uddhāraṇa Gauḍīya Maṭha in Chuṅchurā. Śrīla Gurudeva was personally present at this great festival. In an exultant atmosphere resounding with *saṅkīrtana* and the blowing of conch-shells, Śrī Jagannātha-deva's *abhiṣeka* (sacred bathing ceremony) was performed with one hundred and eight earthen pots full of scented water sanctified by *mantras*. At the assembly in the evening, Śrīla Gurudeva explained the underlying meaning and glories of the *snāna-yātrā*, as explained in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*.

The ten-day festival of Śrī Jagannātha-deva's *ratha-yātrā* began on 20 June 1944. Hundreds of *gṛhastha* devotees from Khulnā, Medinīpura, Vaiṁchī, Velaghariyā and many other places participated. On the first day of the festival, which was the disappearance day of Śrīla Saccidānanda Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, Śrīla Gurudeva delivered a profound address on the philosophy of *viraha* (separation) as understood in Vaiṣṇava literature. The essence of that lecture is as follows.

"The meaning of the word *viraha* is *vi*, special, and *raha*, meeting, in other words 'a special meeting'. Śacīnandana Śrī Gaurahari is the personification of *vipralambha-rasa* (the mellow of separation). The pastimes Śrī Gaurahari exhibited when He resided in the Gambhīrā in Śrī Jagannātha Purī are brilliant examples of *viraha* (also known as *vipralambha*). In the solitude of the night, Mahāprabhu tasted with His intimate associates, Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara and Rāya Rāmānanda, the different kinds of *bhāvas* in separation from Kṛṣṇa. In His internal state of consciousness, He was deeply absorbed in the mood of *viraha* which Śrīmatī Rādhikā, the embodiment of *mahābhāva*, felt after Kṛṣṇa left for Mathurā. Absorbed in this mood, Śrī Gaurahari would lament bitterly and lose external consciousness. Svarūpa Dāmodara and Rāya Rāmānanda would try to console Him, singing verses favourable to His moods. At times they would sing verses from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and at other times from *Gīta-govinda* or *Kṛṣṇa-karṇāmṛta*, or they would sing the verses of Vidyāpati, Caṇḍīdāsa and others. Sometimes Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu would faint, absorbed in *rādhā-bhāva*, remembering in His heart a particular pastime of Kṛṣṇa in Vraja. This deep absorption of Caitanya Mahāprabhu in remembrance of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa is called *vipralambha* or *viraha*.

"On the *viraha-tithi* (disappearance day) of the *guru* or previous *ācāryas*, the true disciple (*sat-śiṣya*) meditates upon the transcendental qualities of these *mahāpuruṣas* and vows to employ their instructions in his life as far as possible. If there is no such contemplation, and if one is only busy with arranging for different kinds of nice *mahā-prasāda*, then it is not a pure *viraha-mahotsava*.

"After Śrī Rāmacandrajī's victory over Laṅkā, He ruled Ayodhyā for a long time. For a special reason, He renounced His consort, Sītā, eleven thousand years after ascending the throne. Lamenting, Sītā arrived at the *āśrama* of Vālmīki Ṛṣi, who gave her shelter. There, Lava and Kuśa (Sītā and Rāma's twin sons) were born. The boys became expert singers and sang Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa* in the assembly of Śrī Rāma. Through Vālmīki, Śrī Rāma then called Sītājī to the royal

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assembly in order for her to prove her purity. At that time Sītājī lamented and called her mother, Pṛthvī-devī, 'O Pṛthvī-devī, if I am pure, and if no thought of any man other than Śrī Rāma has ever touched my inner heart, then open up and take me on your lap.' Hearing this prayer, the earth broke open and Pṛthvī-devī appeared. She took Sītājī on her lap and again entered Pātāla. Rāma Himself, His brothers, His mothers and all the people in the assembly started to cry.

"Once, the play, 'Sītā Entering Pātāla' was performed at a theatre. The next day, the play changed venues, and the crowd was even larger than the day before. If sorrow is the only feeling in transcendental separation, why did such a large number of people gather? To experience pain? Clearly there is also a feeling of transcendental happiness in such separation. Śrī Bhagavān and His associates are full of eternity, knowledge and bliss (*sac-cid-ānanda*) so it is not possible for their birth, death and apparent suffering to be worldly. Therefore, even though externally there may be a feeling of sorrow in separation from the worshipful deity or the devotees of Bhagavān, simultaneously there is an internal feeling of divine and inexpressible happiness. This is the hidden secret of *viraha*. Therefore, in Vaiṣṇava literature an occasion of separation is known as a *viraha-utsava*. *Utsava* means 'a festival or celebration that gives happiness'."

Listening to this deep exposition, the entire audience was captivated and left speechless. Śrīla Gurudeva's lecture was praised everywhere, and pure devotees wove it into a garland to wear around their necks.

On Thursday, 21 June, according to Śrī Jagannātha Purī tradition, the pastime of cleaning the Guṇḍicā Temple (*guṇḍicā-mārjana-līlā*) was observed. Under Śrīla Gurudeva's guidance, everyone went to Śrī Śyāmasundara temple some distance away with glorious *saṅkīrtana*, carrying brooms and earthen water-pots. The temple was swept and washed clean for Śrī Jagannātha-deva. Śrī Gurudeva then told the story of *guṇḍicā-mārjana* from *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*.

The inner meaning of *śrī guṇḍicā-mārjana*, the cleansing of the Guṇḍicā temple, is that it represents the *sādhaka* removing different types of unwanted desires (*anarthas*), offences and worldly attachments from his heart, to establish his worshipful Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda there. If the *sādhaka* does not make any effort to throw out the dirt, which is opposed to *bhakti*, pure love for Bhagavān will not appear in his impure heart, even if he performs *śravaṇa* and *kīrtana* for a long time. Such *śravaṇa-kīrtana* is sometimes a mere semblance, or *ābhāsa*, and is always based on offences (*aparādhas*). Therefore, *sādhakas* should try very carefully to remove these *anarthas*. That is the purport of the cleaning of the Guṇḍicā temple.

The third day of the festival was the day of *ratha-yātrā*. Under Śrī Gurudeva's guidance, Śrī Jagannātha-deva was seated splendidly on His cart, and taken through the different streets of Chuṅchurā to Śrī Śyāmasundara temple with *nagara-saṅkīrtana*. From that day until the return *yātrā*, Jagannāthajī resided in Śrī Śyāmasundara temple. During this time, Śrī Gurudeva deliberated upon and explained the topic of *ratha-yātrā* from *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* every evening. On the day of *herā-paṅcamī*, Śrīla Guru Mahārāja also revealed the secrets of the deeply hidden philosophical truths of this festival.

On Friday, 1 July, Śrī Jagannāthajī returned from Sundarācala (Śrī Śyāmasundara temple) to Nīlācala (Śrī Uddhāraṇa Gauḍīya Maṭha). Once again, the procession was accompanied

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by *nagara-saṅkīrtana*. On the day of the return *yātrā*, Śrī Gurudeva gave an explanation of this from the point of view of the *rūpānuga* Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, "*sei ta' parāṇa-nātha pāinu, yāhā lāgi' madana-dahane jhuri' genu* – Now I have obtained *prāṇanātha* Śrī Kṛṣṇa, for Him I was burning in the flames of Cupid" (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā* 13.113), and "*kṛṣṇa laṅā vraje yāi* – I am taking Kṛṣṇa [from Kurukṣetra] to Vraja" (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā* 1.56). In other words, "We are returning to Vṛndāvana with our *prāṇanātha*, the Lord of our life, Śrī Kṛṣṇa." This is the hidden secret of *ratha-yātrā*. On the evening of this last day there was a grand festival and wonderful *mahā-prasāda* was distributed to all the local people.

Preaching and Vraja-maṇḍala parikramā in 1944



Because of Śrīla Gurudeva's itinerant preaching, Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma *parikramā* and other programs, the number of *maṭha* residents gradually increased. *Paramārādhya* Śrīla Gurudeva now entrusted individual *maṭha* residents with the responsibility of travelling and preaching. They included Śrīmad Bhakti Kuśala Nārasiṁha Mahārāja, Śrīpāda Narottamānanda Brahmacārī Bhakti-kamala, Śrī Dīnārtihara Brahmacārī, Śrī Rādhānātha dāsa and Śrī Viṣṇupada dāsa. These devotees began to preach in Bhāgalpura and other places of Bihāra. Śrīla Gurudeva himself went with Mukunda-gopāla Vrajavāsī Bhakti-madhu, Śrī Sajjana-sevaka Brahmacārī and Bhakta Anila, and preached pure *bhakti* in Jayanagara, Majilapura, Viṣṇupura, Kṛṣṇacandrapura, Ambuliṅga, Cakratīrtha and other places in West Bengal, after which they returned to Śrī Dhāma Navadvīpa.

In 1944, Śrīla Gurudeva organized the eighty-four *kosa* Vraja-maṇḍala *parikramā* during *śrī niyama-sevā kārtika-vrata* (the vows and regulations observed during the month of Kārtika). *Tridaṇḍi-svāmī* Bhakti Kuśala Nārasiṁha Mahārāja, Śrīmad Bhakti Sarvasva Giri Mahārāja, Śrīmad Bhakti Prakāśa Araṇya Mahārāja, Śrī Narottamānanda Brahmacārī Bhakti-kamala and other leading *sannyāsīs* and *brahmacārīs* participated in this *parikramā*. Many tents were provided for the convenience of the pilgrims while they travelled through the forests. The deity of Śrīman Mahāprabhu was worshipped daily with offerings of *bhoga*, along with *kīrtana* and the narration of the glories of the places of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. The *parikramā* was completed in about forty days and everyone returned to their respective places fully satisfied.

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Eighty-four kosa Kṣetra-maṇḍala parikramā

After the Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma *parikramā* in 1945, Śrīla Gurudeva travelled with Śrī Dīnadayāla Brahmacārī, Sajjana-sevaka Brahmacārī, Anaṅga-mohana Brahmacārī and others to different places in Orissa, to enthusiastically preach *śuddha-bhakti* and to plan a Śrī Kṣetra-maṇḍala *parikramā*. They visited Bāleśvara, Śrī Jagannātha Purī, Kaṭaka, Bāsulīśāhī, Ālālanātha, Vorkudī on the banks of the Cilkā-hrada, Kālūpāḍā-ghāṭa, Raṇapurgaṛha state, Sonāvalī (a site of Śrīman Mahāprabhu's footprints), Nayaragaṛha, Khaṇḍapāḍā, Kaṇṭīlā (Śrī Nīla-mādhava), Narasiṁhapura, Khurdā Road and various other places. Śrīman Mahāprabhu passed through all these places when He went to South India. Single-pointed devotees of Śrīman Mahāprabhu have the heartfelt desire to travel to all those places that He and His associates visited, while He was overwhelmed in *bhāva*. Śrīla Gurudeva wanted to do *parikramā* of those places along with pure devotees to awaken the memory of Śrīman Mahāprabhu. After preparing an outline for the future *parikramā*, he returned to Uddhāraṇa Gauḍīya Maṭha in Chuṅchurā.

On 16 October 1945, when all the arrangements had been completed, Śrīla Gurudeva started the journey from Howrah station to Śrī Purī-dhāma in a reserved railway coach, accompanied by pilgrims, *sannyāsīs* and *brahmacārīs* from all over India. The party reached Purī the next day, and rested there. Then, under the shelter of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's *vijaya-vigraha* (the small deity that is taken out on *parikramā*), they had *darśana* of Śrīla Prabhupāda's appearance place Bhakti-kuṭīra (Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's place of *bhajana*). They also visited Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura's place of *bhajana*, Siddha-bakula; his *samādhi*; Puruṣottama Maṭha;



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Ṭoṭā Gopīnātha and the temple of Śrī Jagannātha. At Śrī Jagannātha Mandira, they had *darśana* of Śrī Jagannātha, Baladeva and Subhadrā.

In the evening Śrīla Guru Mahārāja narrated the glories of the *dhāma*. He said that Puruṣottama-kṣetra is not limited to the city of Jagannātha Purī, which is five *kosas*. Rather, its circumference is ten *yojanas* (approximately eighty miles) and the *kṣetra*, which is eighty-four *kosas* in area, has the shape of a conch shell. If anyone within these eighty-four *kosas* leaves his body thinking of Jagannātha, he will not take birth in the womb of a mother again, but will go to Vaikuṇṭha.

One Satya-yuga, Indradyumna Mahārāja came here with his wife and subjects. He constructed a huge temple and, pleasing Śrī Nīlamādhava by his worship, he installed Śrī Nīlamādhava in the form of the four deities, Śrī Śrī Jagannātha, Baladeva, Subhadrā and Sudarśana. The arrangements he instituted for offering *bhoga* are followed to this day.

After Śrīman Mahāprabhu took *sannyāsa*, He resided in the Gambhīrā in Jagannātha Purī on His mother's request. There He fulfilled His three inner desires with His intimate associates. Only those who are fortunate get the opportunity to visit the places marked by Śrī Gaurasundara's lotus feet.

The next day, the *parikramā* party had *darśana* of Caṭaka Parvata, Ṭoṭā Gopīnātha, Yameśvara Ṭoṭā, Lokanātha Śiva, Purī Gosvāmī's well, Mārkaṇḍeya-sarovara, Narendra-sarovara, Indradyumna-sarovara, Guṇḍicā Mandira, Cakra-tīrtha and Svargadvāra.

On the third day, the party visited Govardhana Maṭha, which had been established by Śrī Śaṅkarācārya, Sātalahariyā Maṭha established by Śrī Rāmānuja, Jagannātha Vāṭikā and other various famous places. After this, they arrived at the celebrated abode of Ālālanātha. The deity at Ālālanātha is named Śrī Alvaranātha or Ālālanātha because He is served by the *ālvārs* of the Śrī *sampradāya*. Śrīman Mahāprabhu would go there when He was feeling intense separation from Śrī Jagannātha during *anavasara*, the time after *snāna-yātrā* when Jagannātha does not give *darśana*. When Mahāprabhu offered *sāṣṭāṅga-praṇāma* (prostrate obeisances) in the temple in this state of separation, the stones under Him melted, leaving an impression of His entire body. To this day, the impression of His transcendental body is present on one stone. The pilgrims had *darśana* of this *śilā* and also worshipped it with great faith. In a village nearby are the houses and *bhajana-kuṭīras* of Mahāprabhu's associates, Śrī Rāya Rāmānanda, Śikhi Māhiti and his sister Mādhavī. These places are worth visiting even today.

On the banks of Cilkā-hrada there is a village where the footprints of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu can be seen. This village has a famous history. It had been arranged that Puruṣottama Jānā, the father of Mahārāja Pratāparudra, would marry the daughter of the king of Vidyānagara here. However, when the king of Vidyānagara came to know that Jānā swept the street in front of Śrī Jagannātha's cart during *ratha-yātrā*, he cancelled the wedding. Puruṣottama Jānā attacked Vidyānagara with his army, but returned badly defeated. Very upset by the turn of events, he prayed to Śrī Jagannātha and Śrī Baladeva for victory in the next war. He received an auspicious indication from Śrī Jagannāthajī that his prayer had been accepted and therefore he proceeded with great enthusiasm with his entire army.

To help Their dear servant, Jagannātha and Baladeva went ahead dressed as young soldiers

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riding on two horses, one red and one white. On the way, They met an old woman carrying a pot of yoghurt on her head. Being thirsty, They asked the woman to give Them some yoghurt to drink. When the old woman asked for money, one of the horsemen gave His golden ring to her and said, "We are the king's soldiers. He is coming behind with the army. Show him this ring and ask him for money." Saying this, They again went ahead. A short while later, when the king came with his army, the old lady showed him the ring and asked for money for her yoghurt. On that ring, which the king had himself offered to Śrī Jagannātha, were marked the words 'Śrī Jagannātha'. The king's eyes overflowed with tears, and he became convinced that his worshipful Jagannātha and Baladeva were in the forefront of his army to help him in the war, which he indeed won. The king gave the old lady ownership of a whole village, and even today her descendants are enjoying that property.

From there the *parikramā* party reached the very beautiful Vorākudī on one side of Cilkā-hrada. The pilgrims then crossed Cilkā-hrada on many boats and reached Raṇapuragaṛha. All of these pilgrimage places in Orissa were surrounded by deep, thick jungle, where tigers and other dangerous animals were a real threat. The pilgrims were under protection, but still they went by foot with great care. In spite of the dangers, worship of the deity, offerings of *bhoga*, recitations and lectures went on daily as a matter of course.

Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa appeared in a village near Cilkā-hrada. One evening before the assembled Vaiṣṇavas, Śrīla Gurudeva explained about Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa's transcendental qualities. [The following is the story he related.]

"From his boyhood, Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa was a brilliant person endowed with transcendental intelligence. After becoming expert in Sanskrit, he went for specialized education to Uḍūpī, Śrīla Madhvācārya's place in South India, where he concentrated his studies on *Aṇu-bhāṣya* (Madhvācārya's commentary on *Vedānta-sūtra*) as well as other well-known writings of the Madhva *sampradāya*. He also studied Śrī Rāmānuja's *Śrī-bhāṣya*. Afterward, in Purī, Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa met Śrī Rādhā-Dāmodara Gosvāmī, a follower of Nayanānanda in the disciplic line of Śrī Śyāmānanda. Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa was so impressed by Śrī Rādhā-Dāmodara Gosvāmī's teachings that he took *dīkṣā* from him. He then travelled to Śrī Dhāma Vṛndāvana, where he met the learned and topmost *rasika* Vaiṣṇava Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, who taught him how to enter into the philosophical conclusions of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas.

"Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa spent the remaining part of his life dedicated to the service of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, studying the literature of the six Gosvāmīs and other famous Vaiṣṇava treatises. Seeing his qualification, Śrī Cakravartī Ṭhākura sent him to Galtā-gaddī in Jaipura, where an assembly had gathered for philosophical debate. There he defeated the Rāmānandīs and other scholars who were opposed to the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, and he established the Gauḍīya philosophical conclusions. It was at this time that he wrote *Govinda-bhāṣya*, his commentary on *Brahma-sūtra*, which established the prestige of the Gauḍīya *sampradāya* in every direction."

Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa Prabhu, a solid pillar of the Śrī Gauḍīya *sampradāya*, is prominent among the *rūpānuga* Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas*. Nowadays, some modern so-called Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas do not accept him as a Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *ācārya*. That is their great misfortune.

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Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura calls such ignorant people the spies of Kali.

Śrīla Gurudeva also explained, "The *sūtra*, '*ekam evādvitīyam* – the Absolute Truth is one without a second' (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 6.2.1), does not refer to a *nirākāra nirviśeṣa-brahma* (*brahma* without any form and qualities). The word *advitīya* here means, among many He is the one unparalleled, supreme Truth. We do not perceive one or the number 1 in the word *ekam*, because the word 'one' has three letters, and when we write the number 1, it is composed of millions of dots. The 'one' mentioned in this *sūtra* refers to an all-inclusive one *brahma* which is second to none. In other words, it can be called 'unity in diversity'. Bhagavān is seen as one in His feature of *sarva-śaktimān*, possessed of all potencies, together with the special features of His holy name (*śrī nāma*), His qualities (*guṇa*), His pastimes (*līlā*) and His associates (*parikāra*).

"To illustrate this 'unity in diversity', we can give two examples. The first is that of the human body, which is made up of a conglomeration of parts. If even one part is omitted, the body cannot be accepted as complete. The eyes, nose, ears, tongue and other parts have special features. For example, the left and right eyes are not the same, and they act differently. An eye also has many different parts, such as the eyelids and eyelashes. The inner eye, too, has a pupil and many component parts. In the same way, the other parts of the body have individual distinctive features.

"The second example is that of a mile post. One mile is made up of eight furlongs, and roads are marked with seven posts indicating distances from one to seven furlongs, after which a milestone appears. Then there are seven more posts at one-furlong intervals, and then a second milestone is seen. One can think that a mile comes after six or seven furlongs, but really it is eight furlongs, which make one mile. The important point is that the idea of 'eight furlongs' is relevant only in that it is equal to one mile; it does not exist separately. Similarly, *līlā-puruṣottama* Śrī Bhagavān is one when He is together with the complete variety of His transcendental pastimes. In this material world, a wonderful manifestation of transcendental pastimes, there is no other well-wisher and friend like Him. The *sūtra* '*ekam evādvitīyam*' is used to explain this *siddhānta*."

From Raṇapuragaḍha, the *parikramā* party reached the Nayāgaḍha state, where the pilgrims were given a royal welcome. Śrī Govardhana-pūjā and the *annakūṭa* festival were performed there. The king of that area, Rājā Bahādura, participated in the *annakūṭa* festival along with his family. Then the *parikramā* party went to Kaṇṭīlā (Nīla-mādhava) via Khaṇḍapārā. There, on top of the mountain, they had *darśana* of Nīla-mādhava. The Purāṇas tell the following story about Nīla-mādhava.

In Satya-yuga, Indradyumna, the king of Avantī, heard from some pilgrims about the glories of Śrī Nīla-mādhava, the deity who presided in the area adjacent to Nīla-samudra. He was quite impressed and sent his special envoys to find the exact location of Śrī Nīla-mādhava. One of the envoys was Vidyāpati, the son of his priest. In the course of the young *brāhmaṇa's* search, he reached the shore of Mahā-sāgara which was close to Śrī Nīla-mādhava's mountain. One evening he came upon the house of the chief of the village, a man named Viśvāvasu, who belonged to the *śabara* caste. After some investigation, Vidyāpati guessed that this Viśvāvasu was Nīla-mādhava's *pujārī*. Vidyāpati then married Viśvāvasu's young daughter. Some time later, to

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confirm his suspicions about Nīla-mādhava, he asked his wife where her father would go and who he was worshipping. He appealed to her to arrange that he might have *darśana* of those deities. Viśvāvasu consented to his daughter's wishes, and fulfilled the desire of Vidyāpati.

Viśvāvasu covered Vidyāpati's eyes with a strip of black cloth and did not remove it until they reached Śrī Nīla-mādhava's temple on top of the mountain. Viśvāvasu went to the temple garden to pick flowers. Vidyāpati then saw an astonishing incident. A drowsy crow was sitting on a branch of a tree, which hung over a lake in front of the temple. The crow fell into the water and drowned. The crow's soul immediately took a four-armed, spiritual form, mounted a transcendental airplane and departed for Vaikuṇṭha. When Vidyāpati saw this scene, he also wanted to jump into the lake, but a grave voice from the sky announced, "You have many things to do. Now you must wait." Later, Vidyāpati had *darśana* of Nīla-mādhava and then went home with Viśvāvasu. Thereafter, Vidyāpati returned to his king in the town of Avantī with news of Nīla-mādhava.

[Upon hearing that the Lord had been located,] Mahārāja Indradyumna departed with his family members and his entire army for Nīla-mādhava's *darśana*. But when he arrived, he only saw a sand mountain; Nīla-mādhava's whereabouts were not to be known. Feeling utterly helpless, the king went to the shore of the ocean to perform worship in order to attain Nīla-mādhava's *darśana*. There, Nīla-mādhava appeared to him and said, "At this time I will not take this form of Nīla-mādhava. Instead, I will appear as Śrī Jagannātha, Baladeva, Subhadrā and Sudarśana, to accept your service and give *darśana* to the people of the world."

The pilgrims had *darśana* of the *pratibhū-vigraha* of Nīla-mādhava, and Guru Mahārāja described the history of the famous Nīla-mādhava as described in the scriptures.

From Kaṇṭīlā, Śrīla Gurudeva and the *parikramā* party returned to Purī-dhāma. Along the way, they visited Kaṭaka, Bhuvaneśvara and other places. Bhuvaneśvara, also known as Ekāmra Kānana, is one of the principal places of pilgrimage in India and is situated within Śrī Kṣetra.

Pārvatījī had heard all about the glories of Śrī Jagannātha-kṣetra, and performed rigid austerities in Ekāmra Kānana to obtain *darśana* of Bhagavān. Because of her devotion, Bhagavān Śrī Hari appeared before her in the form of Vāsudeva Kṛṣṇa. When the Lord saw Pārvatī's austere worship, one teardrop (*bindu*) fell from His eyes, and this formed a huge lake (*sarovara*), which became known as Bindu-sarovara. It is said that the word Hindu, signifying the Āryan inhabitants of the area between the Himālayas in the north and Bindu-sarovara in the south, comes from the first syllable *hi* in Himālaya and the last syllable *ndu* of *bindu*.

In Bhuvaneśvara is a huge Śiva *liṅga*, which is famous as Bhuvaneśvara. Nearby is the temple of Śrī Ananta Vāsudeva. Formerly, the *bhoga* offered in this Vāsudeva temple was offered as *mahā-prasāda* to Bhuvaneśvara Mahādeva, and Vaiṣṇavas accepted the *prasāda* from Śrī Bhuvaneśvara, although they do not accept the *prasāda* from Śrī Mahādeva anywhere else. (This custom of first offering *bhoga* to Viṣṇu has been stopped, so Vaiṣṇavas no longer accept Śrī Mahādeva's *mahā-prasāda*; they only accept it from the temple of Ananta Vāsudeva.)

On 19 November, the *parikramā* of Puruṣottama-kṣetra was completed and everyone returned to their respective places.

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Parental affection for his disciples

In 1946, to observe the month-long Kārtika *ūrjā-vrata niyama-sevā*, our most worshipful Śrīla Gurudeva performed *bṛhat* (great) *parikramā* and *pañca-kosī parikramā* of Kāśī-dhāma together with many *sannyāsīs, brahmacārīs* and *gṛhastha-bhaktas*. As in previous years, *śrī nāma-saṅkīrtana*, lectures, readings of *bhakti* literature and other devotional activities took place regularly. After this, Śrīla Gurudeva returned to Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha in Navadvīpa. From there he travelled with Śrī Sajjana-sevaka Brahmacārī, Śrī Anaṅga-mohana Brahmacārī and other *brahmacārīs* and preached pure *bhakti* throughout the Medinīpura district, in places such as Jhinukkhalī, Pūrvacaka, Begunāvāḍī and Kalyāṇapura.

In Kalyāṇapura, Śrī Anaṅga-mohana Brahmacārī suddenly became ill. Śrī Anaṅga-mohana was fully dedicated to serving his *guru*. His voice was very sweet and he used to sing beautifully in *kīrtana*. He was also expert in playing *mṛdaṅga*. In addition, he was extraordinarily skilful in cooking offerings and in the personal service of Gurudeva. Because of his excellent Vaiṣṇava qualities, everyone had great affection for him.

After Anaṅga-mohana became ill, Śrīla Gurudeva returned with him to Kolkata. While there, Anaṅga-mohana started homeopathic treatment with the famous doctor, Captain D. L. Sarkāra. Following Dr. Sarkāra's advice, Śrī Anaṅga-mohana Brahmacārī went to Sidhāvāḍī, an isolated but charming and healthy place on the border of Bengal and Bihāra, and Śrīla Gurudeva himself went with him. When the *brahmacārī's* health did not improve, Śrīla Guru Mahārāja took him to Devaghara in Vaidyanātha-dhāma which was reputed to be good for health. They went there with Triguṇātīta dāsa Brahmacārī, Śrī Gaura-nārāyaṇa dāsa Adhikārī [the author], Śrī Sajjana-sevaka Brahmacārī, Śrī Govardhana Brahmacārī and others. However, Śrī Anaṅga-mohana's health did not improve there either. The *brahmacārī* was then brought back to Sidhāvāḍī, and he was finally admitted in the Ṭambaram TB Sanatorium in Chennai. After making all arrangements for Anaṅga-mohana's treatment, Gurudeva returned to the *maṭha* in Kolkata, leaving Śrī Triguṇātīta Brahmacārī and I [the author] to take care of the sick *brahmacārī* in the Ṭambaram hospital. Despite all these arrangements, however, Śrī Anaṅga-mohana could not be saved and he left this world on 2 March 1950.

I was with Śrī Anaṅga-mohana when he left this world. While there, I never saw his face disturbed. During the whole period of his stay in the hospital, he happily chanted the names of Bhagavān or listened lovingly to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, which we read to him regularly. All the doctors, junior and senior, were very attracted by his gentle behaviour. On the day of his passing, he suddenly said, "Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa are calling me to Vṛndāvana. *Jaya* Śrī Rādhe! *Jaya* Śrī Kṛṣṇa! *Hā* Gauracandra! *Hā* Nityānanda Prabhu! *Hā* Gurudeva!"

With folded hands, I requested him, "Prabhu, please bestow your mercy upon me and in Vṛndāvana, call me also." Upon learning that Śrī Anaṅga-mohana was to depart, the whole team of doctors arrived and proceeded to examine him. He made a gesture to indicate that the women present in the room should leave. All the doctors and visitors were struck with wonder as he took his last breath saying, "*Hā* Rādhe! *Hā* Kṛṣṇa!"

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Śrī Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī (back right) with Śrī Anaṅga-mohana Brahmacārī (front left)

I meditated on this incident very seriously. Ajāmila became free from the sufferings of birth and death and attained Vaikuṇṭha-dhāma simply by the performance of *nāmābhāsa* when he uttered the name 'Nārāyaṇa' to call his son. What then can be said of someone who has supreme faith in his *guru* and who is always chanting the name of Kṛṣṇa free from offences and with *sambandha-jñāna*? In his last moment he was in such good consciousness that he was chanting, "*Hā* Rādhe! *Hā* Kṛṣṇa!" and telling us, "Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are calling me to Vṛndāvana." What will be the destiny of such a high-class *guru-sevaka*? Surely he will attain Vraja-dhāma. We were never able to imagine the glories of this devotee earlier. His life is blessed; his service to his *guru* bore fruit. I understood that this was possible only by the causeless mercy of Śrī Gurudeva, and not by any special *sādhana-bhajana*. My faith in our worshipful Śrī Gurudeva was intensified, and when I returned from Ṭambaram, I devoted myself to serving my *guru* with even greater faith.

"... his service to his *guru* bore fruit. I understood that this was possible only by the causeless mercy of Śrī Gurudeva, and not by any special *sādhana-bhajana*."

Paramārādhyatama Śrīla Gurudeva established Siddhāvāṭī Gauḍīya Maṭha in Sidhāvāḍī in the memory of his dear servant Anaṅga-mohana Brahmacārī. Even today, daily worship of the deity as well as lectures and *kīrtana* are going on, and every year a *viraha-utsava* is held in memory of this *brahmacārī*.

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Śrāddha ceremony according to Vaiṣṇava rites in Kalyāṇapura

Śrī Rāsa-bihārī dāsa Adhikārī Bhakti-śāstrī Bhiṣag-ratna Mahāśaya, an inhabitant of Kalyāṇapur (in Medinīpura district), zealously endeavoured to invite Śrīla Gurudeva to participate in the observance of the *śrāddha* ceremony of his mother. Śrīla Gurudeva attended the program with many of his associates. The priestly duties at this ceremony were performed by *pūjyapāda* Śrī Bhakti Bhūdeva Śrautī Mahārāja, who was a favourite of Śrīla Prabhupāda and who had a close relationship with Śrīla Guru Mahārāja. He was a special preacher expert in Sanskrit, Bengali, Hindi, English and other languages, and had preached pure *bhakti* in Kāśī, Prayāga, Paṭnā, Medinīpura and other regions under the guidance of Śrīla Prabhupāda. He had also managed the monthly Hindi magazine *Bhāgavata-patrikā* during Śrīla Prabhupāda's time.

Here it must be particularly noted that Śrīla Gurudeva was very firm in the philosophical conclusions of *bhakti* and fearlessly spoke the impartial truth. He was never reluctant to speak *bhakti-siddhānta*, regardless of whether his words pleased others or not. Although *pūjyapāda* Śrautī Mahārāja was his godbrother and close friend, Śrīla Gurudeva still strongly objected to the errors he made in conducting this Vaiṣṇava *śrāddha* ceremony. He has made a signed statement to this effect in his notebook. The following points are taken from his notes.

(1) Śrīla Śrautī Mahārāja chose Brahmā as the object of worship in this Vaiṣṇava *śrāddha*. (Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, Śrīman Mahāprabhu and *śrī gurudeva* were not chosen as the worshipful objects.) Śrīla Śrautī Mahārāja said that it is proper to worship Brahmā in Vaiṣṇava *śrāddha*, because Śrī Vaikhānas Mahārāja has written this in his *paddhati*. Yet the arrangement of choosing the object of worship is given in *Sat-kriyā-sāra-dīpikā*, *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* and other Smṛtis.

(2) In this ceremony, unboiled paddy rice (*arvā* rice) with ghee was sanctified by *mantras* and given to a *smārta brāhmaṇa* (Śrī Rāsa-bihārī's family *guru*) first, and *tridaṇḍī-sannyāsīs* were given donations after this. This practice is also contrary to *vaiṣṇava-smṛtis* which state that substances offered to Bhagavān should be given to *śrī gurudeva* and Vaiṣṇavas.

(3) In regard to establishing the presiding deity (*brahma-sthāpana*) of the *śrāddha*, Śrīpāda Śrautī Mahārāja stated that this is not a duty, because *Sat-kriyā-sāra-dīpikā* mentions that in the absence of a presiding deity, a deity made of *kuśa* can be established. He also said that *Sat-kriyā-sāra-dīpikā* was composed by Vaikuṇṭha Vācaspati and not by Śrī Gopāla Bhaṭṭa, which is not true. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura collected an old copy of the text by Śrī Gopāla Bhaṭṭa from the famous royal library in Jaipura and published it, and the *gosvāmīs* of Śrī Rādhā-Ramaṇa still have an old copy of the manuscript by Śrī Gopāla Bhaṭṭa.

(4) *Adhivāsa* (preliminary rites) was performed with some *smārta mantras* rather than in accordance with *Sat-kriyā-sāra-dīpikā*.

(5) At this ceremony, giving of charity was performed first, instead of after Vaiṣṇava *homa*, as stipulated in *Sat-kriyā-sāra-dīpikā*.

Śrīpāda Śrautī Mahārāja called the *smārta guru-brāhmaṇa* inside the sacrificial altar and gave a begging bowl, eating plate, wooden shoes, umbrella, bedding and other things in charity to him. This custom is completely opposed to *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* (9.103), where it is clearly written:

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svabhāvasthaiḥ karmajaḍān
vañcayan draviṇādibhiḥ
harer-naivedya-sambhārān
vaiṣṇavebhyaḥ samarpayet

One should deceive those who are grossly involved in *karma*, i.e. the non-Vaiṣṇavas, by giving them unoffered items or wealth, but one should give the Vaiṣṇavas the items which have been offered to Bhagavān.

(6) There was no performance of *achidra-vācana*, the chanting of *mantras* to allay faults, as described in *Sat-kriyā-sāra-dīpikā*, for the defects in the *prāyaścitta homa*. (*Uddicya*, concluding activities, were also left out.)

(7) In the Vaiṣṇava sacrifice, no sacrifice was performed to the *guru-paramparā*.

(8) Some portion of the ghee of the Vaiṣṇava *homa* was offered in the fire for each personality's name, and a portion was kept in a separate pot, which was mixed with *mahā-prasāda* and was given as *piṇḍa* at the time of offering *piṇḍa*. (This process has not been mentioned in any *vaiṣṇava-smṛti*.)

(9) Unoffered uncooked rice, *dāl*, salt, potatoes, green bananas and ghee were kept in two separate pots, and both were offered in the name of the expired mother of Rāsa-bihārī. One of these was given directly to the *smārta-brāhmaṇa*, the family *guru*, who accepted it sitting on a separate *āsana* in the sacrificial altar. This is improper in every respect.

(10) In this ceremony there was no worship even of Śrī Vāsudeva as given in *Sat-kriyā-sāra-dīpikā*.

(11) *Śānti-homa*, circumambulation and other Vaiṣṇava customs were omitted in this ceremony.

(12) Offering of *piṇḍa* and *bhoga* was also not performed in accordance with the rules.

(13) It seems that the *mantras* used in this ceremony were also different [from those in *vaiṣṇava-smṛti*].

(14) *Ācamana*, etc., also, was not performed.

(15) *Prasāda* was served facing south. This is not proper.

(Please see page 133 in the first Hindi edition of *Sat-kriyā-sāra-dīpikā*.)

(Signed) B. P. Keshab 10.11.47

Preaching in Bihāra

In 1945, Śrīla Gurudeva sent *pūjyapāda* Bhakti Kuśala Nārasiṁha Mahārāja, Śrī Narottamānanda Bhakti-kamala, Śrī Rādhānātha dāsa Adhikārī, Prema-prayojana Brahmacārī and others to preach pure *bhakti* in Dumkā, Sāhibagañja, Rājmahal and Bhāgalpur in the state of Bihāra. While Śrī Narottamānanda Bhakti-kamala was preaching in Sāhibagañja, I [then Śrīman Nārāyaṇa Tivārī, the author] became acquainted with him. At that time, I was working in the office of the police station. Upon hearing *brahmacārījī's* extremely sweet *hari-kathā*, I became eager to renounce this material world. Nonetheless, I remained in my service for some time. In December 1946, however, I retired from the police service and left home to join Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha in Navadvīpa-dhāma. The following year, 1947, on the day of Gaura-janmotsava after the Navadvīpa-dhāma *parikramā*, *paramārādhyatama* Śrīla Gurudeva gave me *śrī harināma* and *dīkṣā*. I then became known as Śrī Gaura-nārāyaṇa Bhakta-bāndhava.

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Śrī vyāsa-pūjā celebration

On 27 February 1948, *śrī vyāsa-pūjā* was celebrated at Śrī Uddhāraṇa Gauḍīya Maṭha to commemorate fifty years from the day Śrī Gurupāda-padma appeared. On the first day of this occasion there was an elaborate observation of *śrī vyāsa-pūjā*, including the worship of *kṛṣṇa-pañcaka*, *vyāsa-pañcaka*, *ācārya-pañcaka*, *sanakādi-pañcaka*, *guru-pañcaka*, *upāsya-pañcaka* and *pañca-tattva-pañcaka*. Then *puṣpāñjali* and a fire sacrifice concluded the morning ceremony. In the evening program, Śrīla Gurudeva lectured from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and explained the episode in which Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vedavyāsa obtains realization of the Absolute Truth while in *samādhi*. On the third day of the festival, on *jagad-guru* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda's auspicious appearance day (*avirbhāva-tithi*), Śrīla Gurudeva worshipped the nicely decorated deity of Śrīla Prabhupāda. *Āratī* took place during the singing of *'Śrīla Prabhupāda āratī'*, a song composed by Śrīla Gurudeva, and then *puṣpāñjali* was offered to Śrīla Prabhupāda's lotus feet. Every year after that, Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti observed *śrī vyāsa-pūjā* in this elaborate way.

The departure of Śrīla Narahari Sevā-vigraha Prabhu

On 30 January 1948, Nāthūrāma Goḍse shot Mahātma Gāndhī at the Delhi prayer assembly. On that very same day, *ajātaśatru pūjyapāda* Śrī Narahari Brahmacārī Sevā-vigraha Prabhu disappeared from this world in Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma, during the *brahma-muhūrta* hour. At that time, Śrīla Gurudeva was preaching in the Medinīpura area. When he returned to Chuṅchurā on 1 February, he received a telegram from Śrī Mahānanda Brahmacārī with this heartbreaking news, and became stunned like a stone. When his external consciousness returned a short time later, he began to cry, overwhelmed by the piercing separation.

Śrī Sevā-vigraha Prabhu was one of the foremost disciples and intimate servants of *jagad-guru* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda. Our most worshipful Śrīla Gurupāda-padma had a very close friendship with him; they lived together for a long time and served Śrī Dhāma Māyāpura in countless ways. Śrīla Prabhupāda turned over the entire responsibility for Śrī Dhāma Māyāpura to this dear servant and could then preach *śuddha-bhakti* everywhere with a peaceful mind. [After Śrīla Prabhupāda's disappearance,] Śrī Sevā-vigraha Prabhu and Śrīla Gurudeva left Caitanya Maṭha together and established Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha in Śrī Dhāma Navadvīpa. Like Śrīla Prabhupāda, Śrīla Gurudeva entrusted the whole responsibility of Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha to Śrī Sevā-vigraha Prabhu and could thus preach peacefully everywhere.

In the first issue of *Śrī Gauḍīya-patrikā*, the main magazine of the Samiti, Śrīla Gurudeva wrote an essay entitled *Viraha-māṅgalya*, about Sevā-vigraha Prabhu. "The torment I feel by not being able to see Śrī Gurupāda-padma and Ṭhākura Narahari Sevā-vigraha Prabhu, who was devoted solely to serving him, mingles with my pen, causing it to falter at every step and proceed so slowly across the page.

"Śrīla Prabhupāda was very pleased to discover his intimate servitor, *pūjyapāda* Śrī Narahari

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Śrī Narahari Brahmacārī Sevā-vigraha Prabhu

Brahmacārī Sevā-vigraha. He handed over the whole responsibility of his beloved *ākara-maṭha-rāja*, Śrī Caitanya Maṭha, to him and happily went to far distant places to preach pure *bhakti* with full concentration. … O Narahari Dā! Your uninterrupted service to Hari, Guru and Vaiṣṇavas will manifest of its own accord in the memory of anyone who takes your auspicious name. You are the embodiment of Śrīla Prabhupāda's dear-most Śrī Caitanya Maṭha; when we lived with you, we all thought that we were living in the Caitanya Maṭha. You have performed the ideal service in a way that is supremely blissful and free from anger. This is the sole aim and objective of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti."

Śrīla Gurudeva also glorified his best friend, Śrīla Narahari Ṭhākura, in his preface to

"O Narahari Dā! Your uninterrupted service to Hari, Guru and Vaiṣṇavas will manifest of its own accord in the memory of anyone who takes your auspicious name. ... You have performed the ideal service in a way that is supremely blissful and free from anger. This is the sole aim and objective of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti."

Prabandhāvali, which was presented on Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's disappearance day. In that preface he described him as a brilliant star of the Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti who is eternally immersed in the flow of nectar coming from Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura.

Śrīla Narahari Sevā-vigraha Prabhu appeared in the famous Vasu dynasty of the village of Deyāḍā in the Yaśohara district of East Bengal. In his early life he and his family were initiated with the *śakti-mantra*, but he and the majority of his family members were later influenced by Vaiṣṇava association and were initiated into the *kṛṣṇa-mantra*, and all began to perform *sādhana-bhajana*. When his elder brother left this world, Śrī Narahari renounced his family and this material world, and took shelter at the lotus feet of *jagad-guru oṁ viṣṇupāda* Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda. Śrīla Prabhupāda was pleased with Śrī Narahari's versatile abilities and service mentality, and appointed him manager of Śrī Caitanya Maṭha.

Śrī Narahari was like a mother in nurturing the young boys who lived in the *maṭha*. Every

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day he would wake them up, feed them and take care of them. Because of this sweet, affectionate behaviour, the *maṭha* residents referred to him as 'the mother of the Gauḍīya Maṭha'. But everyone, young and old, addressed him as 'Narahari Dā'. He was always chanting *śrī harināma* and was totally absorbed in the various services of the *maṭha*. No one knew when he slept and when he woke. Sometimes in the deep night, when everyone else was sleeping, he would sit in his secluded *bhajana-kuṭī* and chant *śrī harināma* with *vipralambha-bhāva* (feelings of separation from Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa). We have heard that he sometimes used to tie his *śikhā* to a wooden handle high on the wall to force himself to stay awake while he chanted *harināma*. No *maṭha* resident ever saw him become angry. Even if someone needed to be chided for some special reason, he would scold them sweetly while smiling with great affection.

The following incident took place when I [the author] was new in the *maṭha*. I was young then, and very energetic. In the morning, the local farmers would bring vegetables, milk and other products from their neighbourhoods to the vegetable market on the street just outside the *maṭha*. Śrī Sevā-vigraha Prabhu and Śrīla Narottamānanda Brahmacārī went outside on the side of the road and began to bargain for vegetables for the *maṭha*. The farmers were an unruly lot, and they quarrelled about everything. One time one of them struck Narottamānanda Prabhu on the head, drawing blood. Hearing the tumult, I came out, and when I saw the blood on Prabhujī's head, I lost all self-control. I took a piece of bamboo from the courtyard of the *maṭha* and hit that insolent farmer on his back so hard that the bamboo broke and the farmer fell to the ground. In a moment, hundreds of farmers assembled and began to create an uproar, threatening to attack the *maṭha*. However, *pūjya-pāda* Śrīman Sevā-vigraha Prabhu calmly and peacefully settled this difficult situation with great expertise. First, he caught me and locked me up in a room in the *maṭha*. Then he confronted the crowd alone, and pacified them all.

Sevā-vigraha Prabhu had a very affectionate manner. He went to the home of all sorts of people and spoke *hari-kathā*. He took an interest in people's happiness and distress, and they endured their difficulties because of his sweet words.

Śrīla Gurudeva could never forget his dear godbrother. Whenever he remembered Śrī Sevā-vigraha Prabhu, he became overwhelmed with feelings of separation. Śrīla Gurudeva named the huge entrance gate of Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha 'Śrī Narahari Toraṇa' in Śrī Sevā-vigraha's memory. This can still be seen today.



Śrī Narahari Toraṇa

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The decision to establish a maṭha in Jagannātha Purī and the publishing of a monthly transcendental magazine

After the Śrī Kṣetra-maṇḍala *parikramā*, Khuṭiyājī, the respected *paṇḍā* of Purī, as well as many godbrothers, implored Śrīla Gurudeva to establish a branch *maṭha* of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti in Śrī Jagannātha Purī. Śrīla Gurudeva liked the idea. In 1948, after the week-long Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma *parikramā* and Gaura-janmotsava, the prominent members of the Samiti made these decisions at an assembly in the Kolkata *maṭha*:

(1) Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti will establish a branch *maṭha* in Śrī Jagannātha Purī.

(2) Śrī Dvārakā-dhāma *parikramā* will be performed in the upcoming month of Kārtika.

(3) A transcendental monthly magazine, *Śrī Gauḍīya-patrikā*, will be published for the next Gaura-pūrṇimā, and this will be the main magazine of the Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti.

That very day, Śrīla Gurudeva began work to fulfil these resolves. He gave instructions to collect a block, a rubber stamp, a three-coloured picture of Śrīla Prabhupāda, a sign board for the *Gauḍīya-patrikā's* office and other items.

During *ūrjā-vrata niyama-sevā*, approximately one hundred and fifty pilgrims, *sannyāsīs*, *brahmacārīs* and *gṛhastha-bhaktas* participated in the pilgrimage to Dvārakā. The *parikramā* party first took *darśana* of the pastime places in Mathurā and Vṛndāvana, then of Śrī Govinda, Gopīnātha and Madana-mohana in Jaipura and of Galtā nearby. Formerly, *vedāntācārya* Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa defeated the Vaiṣṇavas of the Śrī *sampradāya* in a major philosophical debate in Galtā and waved the victory banner of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas. In Galtā, Śrīla Guru Mahārāja gave a brilliant lecture on Śrī Baladeva



Galtā-gaddī

Vidyābhūṣaṇa and his commentary on *Brahma-sūtra*. He said that Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa Prabhu defeated the opposition by the inspiration of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, and on the strength of Cakravartī Ṭhākura's arguments. The *mahanta* of the Śrī *sampradāya* at Galtā-gaddī was extremely impressed by Ācārya Kesarī's personality and by his discourse, and had Śrī Ṭhākurajī's *mahā-prasāda* served to the entire *parikramā* party.

From there the pilgrims reached Porbandara via Puṣkara, Ajmer, Mehasānā, Mīramgāon,

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Surendranagara and Ḍholā. In Porbandara they had *darśana* of the temple of Śrī Sudāmā Vipra. They then travelled by ship to Veṇṭa Dvārakā and visited the temples of Śrī Dvārakeśajī, Dāūjī and Rukmiṇījī. The next day, they took the boat Sonavati to Gopī-tālāba and Nāgeśvara Śiva, and finally reached Gomatī Dvārakā, where the pilgrims had *darśana* of Śrī Dvārakādhīśa, Totādrī Maṭha and Gomatī Gaṅgā. After that, the pilgrims returned home via Mehasānā and Āgrā.

Preaching in Medinīpura and Sundarvana

In January 1949, Śrīla Guru Mahārāja, Śrī Dīnārtihara Brahmacārī, Śrī Sajjana-sevaka Brahmacārī and Śrī Gaura-nārāyaṇa dāsa Adhikārī [the author] blessed the house of Hari-caraṇa dāsa Adhikārī in Jukhiyā in the district of Medinīpura. They stayed there for some time and Śrīla Gurudeva gave philosophical lectures on *sanātana-dharma*, the eternal occupation of the soul, at religious assemblies in the nearby villages.

Early one morning during Śrīla Guru Mahārāja's sojourn in Jukhiyā, Kṣīroda-candra Bhuīyāṁ, a retired judge from Mohāṭī Grāma, came for a visit. Śrīla Gurudeva was inside the house chanting *harināma* on his beads, while I [the author] was studying a book in the sweet rays of the winter sun on the veranda outside. Śrī Kṣīroda Bābū, who was sitting on a mat nearby, asked, "What are you reading?"

I answered, "I am reading *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*."

Kṣīroda Bābū inquired, "Who is the author?"

"*Jagad-guru* Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī."

"Why are you not studying *Śāṅkara-bhāṣya* by *jagad-guru* Śrī Śaṅkara Ācārya?"

"Because Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī is much more authoritative than Śrī Śaṅkara Ācārya."

Kṣīroda Bābū exclaimed, "What did you say? The very recent Sanātana Gosvāmī is a greater authority than Ācārya Śaṅkara? Ācārya Śaṅkara is the direct incarnation of Śaṅkara (Lord Śiva). He is the author of the commentary on *Brahma-sūtra* and he vanquished all the contemporary *ācāryas* of India."

I replied, "Without a doubt, Ācārya Śaṅkara is an *avatāra* of *devādhīdeva* Śaṅkara, who is one of the Supreme Lord's *guṇāvataras* (an incarnation who embodies one of the characteristics of the Lord), and he is one of the *vibhūtis* (opulences) of Bhagavān. According to the verse, *vaiṣṇavānāṁ yathā śambhuḥ* (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 12.13.16), Śaṅkara is the topmost Vaiṣṇava and devotee of Bhagavān. Nonetheless, Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī is one of Svayam Bhagavān Śrī Śacīnandana's most beloved associates, and he is also the dear-most Śrī Lavaṅga Mañjarī of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, Sanātana Gosvāmī's superiority is self-evident."

Śrī Kṣīroda Bābū was somewhat taken aback by this answer. In the meantime, Ācārya Kesarī had heard the voices while he was chanting *harināma* inside the house and had listened attentively to the discussion. He quickly appeared on the scene, and a philosophical battle started between Kṣīroda Bābū and himself.

Kṣīroda Bābū asked, "Why don't you have the *brahmacārīs* study *Śāṅkara-bhāṣya* of the *Brahma-sūtra*?"

Gurudeva explained, "We have them study *Śrī-bhāṣya*, *Āṇu-bhāṣya*, *Govinda-bhāṣya* and other commentaries of Vyāsa's *Brahma-sūtra*, but not the commentary of Ācārya Śaṅkara."

"Why not? You do not study Ācārya Śaṅkara's commentary, even though he is an incarnation of Śaṅkara?"

"Even though he is an incarnation of Śaṅkara, the views in his commentary are completely

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fabricated. This false philosophy is in reality covered Buddhism only, and Śaṅkara took shelter of it by the order of Bhagavān, in order to control the Buddhists who were opposed to the Vedas and the Supreme Lord. This is clearly mentioned in *Padma Purāṇa, māyāvādam asat-śāstram.*"

"But don't you accept the four *mahā-vākyas* of the Vedas: *ahaṁ brahmāsmi, prajñānaṁ brahma, tat tvam asi* and *ekam evādvitīyam*, and the other clauses that Śaṅkara has established?"

"It is not written in the Vedas or Upaniṣads that these four statements (*vākyas*) are *mahā-vākyas*. If what you are claiming is true, then please support it with evidence."

Kṣīroda Bābū was unable to answer, and sat quietly for some time.

Gurudeva went on, "The only *mahā-vākya* in the Vedas is *oṁ*; all other clauses are secondary. Alternatively, you can say that all the clauses in the Vedas are *mahā-vākyas*. Do you consider that the *nirākāra, nirviśeṣa, nirguṇa* and *niraṅjana brahma*, which Śaṅkara has established, is the same as *saviśeṣa, sarva-śaktimān* and *ānanda-maya brahma*, the shelter of all transcendental qualities, established by Śrīla Vedavyāsa?"

"Why not? All the eminent scholars of India corroborate the doctrine of Śaṅkara."

"Ācārya Śrī Rāmānuja, Madhva Ācārya, Nimbāditya, Viṣṇusvāmī, Vallabha Ācārya, Kumārila Bhaṭṭa and other learned persons have completely annihilated the doctrine of Śaṅkara. The *nirviśeṣa, niḥśaktik, nirākara brahma* can never be *ānanda-svarūpa* or *ānanda-maya*. This philosophy is just a kind of hidden Buddhism."

Kṣīroda Bābū said, "Your statement is thoroughly confusing. Ācārya Śaṅkara clearly established the doctrine, *brahma satyaṁ jaganmithyā jīva brahmaiva nā paraḥ*. Additionally, he uses the term *ānanda-svarūpa* to indicate *brahma*. When the *jīva* attains liberation from *māyā* it becomes one with *brahma* and perceives *ānanda-svarūpa brahma*."

Gurudeva explained further, "This *siddhānta* is only Ācārya Śaṅkara's fabrication. It is against *śāstra*. I can destroy Ācārya Śaṅkara's bogus idea that *brahma* is *ānanda-svarūpa*, simply on the basis of its inference. Later on, I will demolish the statement that the *jīva* becomes *brahma* by merging into *brahma* and that the world is false. First, can you explain why you want to merge into the *nirviśeṣa-brahma*?"

"Because *brahma* is *ānanda-svarūpa*, the embodiment of bliss, so the *jīva* who merges into this *brahma* also becomes *ānanda-svarūpa brahma*."

"I say that Ācārya Śaṅkara's *nirviśeṣa-brahma* is an embodiment of stool. Do you have any objection to that? If a *jīva* is able to merge into *ānanda-svarūpa brahma*, then he cannot have a separate experience of it. So how, being *brahma*, is the *jīva* able to experience bliss, if by desiring to merge with *nirviśeṣa-brahma* it cannot be realized? It is only possible to experience bliss when one's existence is separate from it. For example, anyone who tastes sugar is able to say that sugar is sweet. But if the person is turned into sugar, how can he experience his own sweetness? Similarly, how can anyone who is turned into stool experience his own bad smell? Therefore, it doesn't make any difference whether you call *nirviśeṣa-brahma* the embodiment of bliss or the embodiment of stool. They are one and the same thing, because there is no separate taster."

Kṣīroda Bābū became completely silent. He offered respects to Śrī Gurudeva, lowered his head and returned to his home.

While we were staying with Śrīla Gurupāda-padma, we observed him discussing *siddhānta*

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with prominent impersonalists (*advaita-vādīs*) in this way. In the face of his deep personality, his brilliant language, his wealth of scriptural evidence and his strong arguments, all were humbled. We will present some of these doctrinal debates in the course of this book.

In the evening Śrīla Gurudeva gave a brilliant lecture on *sanātana-dharma* to a huge public audience nearby. For almost two-and-a-half hours, ten to fifteen thousand people sat quietly like wooden dolls, reverentially listening to his speech. The following is the essence of that lecture.

"According to the Vedas, Upaniṣads, *Vedānta-sūtra*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Bhagavad-gītā* and other scriptures, the root cause of creation and annihilation and the ultimate supreme Truth is Svayam Bhagavān. He is not subject to birth, death or destruction. He is the complete eternal Truth because He exists in the past, present and future. The meaning of the word *sanātana* (eternal) is *sadā* (always) and *tan* (to continue), and refers to one who exists in the past, present and future. Thus the meaning of *sanātana-dharma* is the constitutional function of someone who is ever-existing. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.14.32) it is said:

aho bhāgyam aho bhāgyaṁ
nanda-gopa-vrajaukasām
yan-mitraṁ paramānandaṁ
pūrṇaṁ brahma sanātanam

Oh, how greatly fortunate are Nanda Bābā, Yaśodā-maiyā and all the other *gopas* and *gopīs* of Vraja! There is factually no limit to their good fortune, because Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is the abode of supreme bliss (*paramānanda*), and the eternal and complete form of *brahma*, is their relative and friend.

"Here, Kṛṣṇa is called the eternal, complete *brahma*. The *jīvātmā* is also acknowledged to be this eternal truth (*sanātana-tattva*) because the uncountable souls are eternal parts of the eternal supreme *brahma* Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself calls them His eternal parts in *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* (15.7):

mamaivāṁśo jīva-loke
jīva-bhūtaḥ sanātanaḥ
manaḥ ṣaṣṭhānīndriyāṇi
prakṛti-sthāni karṣati

O Arjuna, I am Sarveśvara (the Lord of all). All *jīvas* are My parts and they are eternal. Like the empty space inside a water pot, they are not fabricated or false. Due to being conditioned and opposed to Me, they are struggling intensely with the mind and the five senses in this material world.

"And also, *nityaḥ sarva-gataḥ sthāṇur acalo 'yaṁ sanātanaḥ* (*Bhagavad-gītā* 2.24). 'This *jīvātmā* is changeless and immortal. It cannot be cut by any weapon, burnt by fire, moistened by water or dried by air. It is eternal, all-pervasive, unchanging, steadfast and ever-existing (*sanātana*).'

"Thus, according to the Vedic scriptures there are two *sanātana-tattvas*, or eternal principles: one is Svayam Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the undivided, complete *sanātana-tattva*; and the other is the *jīva*, the divided and tiny *sanātana-tattva*. The nature of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, *bṛhat-caitanya-svarūpa* (the embodiment of complete consciousness), is unchangeable, but if the *jīva* is opposed to Bhagavān, his pure nature can be covered due to his being eternal but atomic in size (*aṇu-sanātana-tattva*). But by nature, the *jīva's* constitutional nature (*dharma*) is pure and eternal. *Prema* is the only *sanātana-dharma*

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of the *jīva*. The eternal, pure *prema* is service to Kṛṣṇa; therefore the *svarūpa-dharma* or *sanātana-dharma* of the *jīva* is service to Kṛṣṇa.

"The pure *sanātana-dharma* of the conditioned living being is distorted by *māyā*. In such circumstances, the living entity considers the *dharma* of the gross and the subtle body to be his *dharma*, because he only understands the gross and the subtle body. But the *dharma* of these two bodies is not *sanātana-dharma*, because it is perishable and prone to change. 'I am Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Sikh, Buddhist' and 'I am a *brāhmaṇa* or *kṣatriya*' are identifications of the gross body, so this gross *dharma* is not perpetual. Nowadays, pure *sanātana-dharma* is rarely preached due to a lack of pure understanding of the Absolute Truth. Actually the relationship of servant and master between the *jīva* and the Supreme Lord is eternal and ever-existing (*sanātana*). This relationship is what is known as *sanātana-dharma*. In different places in the scriptures *sanātana-dharma* is referred to as *bhāgavata-dharma* or *vaiṣṇava-dharma*."

After this, Śrīla Gurudeva extensively preached pure *sanātana-dharma*, which is also known as pure *bhakti-dharma*. Accompanied by Śrī Nagendra-govardhana Brahmacārī and Śrī Gaṇeśa dāsa, he preached in the towns of Kulabāḍī, Haṁscauḍā, Pichladā, Jhīnukkhālī, Naraghaṭa and Terapekhyā. From there they travelled by boat with a party of devotees from Pūrī to Gadāmathurā Sector 7, Gadāmathurā Sector 5, 6 and 8, Āīplāṭa Sector 1, Kedārpura, Āīplāṭa Sector 2, Sūryapura and various other places. He returned to the *maṭha* in Chuṅchurā a month-and-a-half later.

The self-manifestation of Śrī Gauḍīya-patrikā on the occasion of Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma parikramā and Śrī Gaura-janmotsava

In March 1949, the *parikramā* and Śrī Gaura-janmotsava were celebrated with great festivities at Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha in Navadvīpa. On Gaura-pūrṇimā day, *Śrī Gauḍīya-patrikā*, the transcendental monthly magazine of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti, manifested itself. On the masthead of the front cover of this first issue, the name of *Śrī Patrikā* was written above a *mṛdaṅga* and *karatālas*, surrounded by a lotus, club, conch shell and disc. Below this was a picture of Śrīla Sarasvatī Prabhupāda.

The founder and editor-in-chief (*niyāmaka*) of *Śrī Patrikā* was *parivrājakācārya tridaṇḍi-svāmī* Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Mahārāja, the editor was Śrī Mahānanda Brahmacārī Bhakti-śāstrī Bhaktyāloka, and the *Patrikā* preaching managers were *tridaṇḍi-svāmī* Śrīmad



Śrī Mahānanda Brahmacārī Bhakti-śāstrī Bhaktyāloka

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The first issue of *Śrī Gauḍīya-patrikā*

Bhakti Kuśala Nārasiṁha Mahārāja and *paṇḍita* Śrīmad Jagannātha-ballabha Bābājī Mahārāja. The contributing editors were *mahopadeśaka paṇḍita* Śrīpāda Narottamānanda Brahmacārī Bhakti-kamala Bhakti-śāstrī, *paṇḍita* Śrīyuta Nāma-vaikuṇṭha dāsa Adhikārī, *paṇḍita* Śrīyuta Rādhānātha dāsa Adhikārī and *paṇḍita* Śrīyuta Gaura-nārāyaṇa dāsa Adhikārī [the author]. The office manager was *paṇḍita* Kṛṣṇa-kāruṇya Brahmacārī Bhakti-maṇḍapa. The magazine was published by Śrī Uddhāraṇa Gauḍīya Maṭha, Caumāthā, Chuṅchurā (Hoogly) by Śrī Sajjana-sevaka Brahmacārī and printed by Śānti Press. The auspicious invocation (*maṅgalācaraṇa*) of *Śrī Patrikā* contained prayers to Śrī Hari, Guru and Vaiṣṇavas.

The essay *Viraha-māṅgalya* (*Auspiciousness of Separation*) was written with a desire to attain the *svārasikī-sevā*, the natural *rasa*-filled service inherent to one's *svarūpa*, of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Vinoda-bihārī, under the guidance of *vipralambha-rasa-maya vigraha* Śrī Śrīman Mahāprabhu, the embodiment of one saturated with the rich moods of separation, along with the eternally liberated, most munificent *paramahaṁsas* who are immersed in His moods. In addition, the magazine included philosophical dissertations by *jagad-guru* Śrīla Prabhupāda, Śrī Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, an article about *Śrī Gauḍīya-patrikā* and Śrīla Gurudeva's article entitled *Śrī Gauḍīya Vedāntācārya Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa*. There were many other essays which enhanced the splendour of *Śrī Patrikā*, having been well researched and containing an explanation of *prema-bhakti*. The first issue was dedicated at the lotus feet of Śrī Nṛsiṁhadeva, the destroyer of all obstacles, whose temple in Devapallī was visited on the first day of the Śrī Dhāma *parikramā*, and it was placed in the lotus hands of Śrīla Prabhupāda in his *samādhi-mandira* in Śrī Dhāma Māyāpura, when the pilgrims visited it on the last day of the *parikramā*. The Vaiṣṇavas enthusiastically began to sign up for a yearly subscription of the *Patrikā*.

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Śrī Ayodhyā-dhāma, Naimiṣāraṇya parikramā and ūrjā-vrata

In April 1949, Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti's founder and president, *parivrājakācārya tridaṇḍi-svāmī* Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, was invited to Śrī Gaurāṅga Maṭha in Kesiyāḍī in the district of Medinīpura by the *maṭha's* founder and president, *tridaṇḍi-svāmī* Śrīmad Bhakti Kumuda Santa Mahārāja. Śrīla Gurudeva accepted the invitation and went with many of his associates. Śrīmad Bhakti Sarvasva Giri Mahārāja, Śrīmad Bhakti Gaurava Vaikhānasa Mahārāja and other *sannyāsīs, brahmacārīs* and *gṛhastha* Vaiṣṇavas were also present. Śrīla Gurudeva then returned to Śrī Uddhāraṇa Gauḍīya Maṭha in Chuṅchurā and celebrated Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's disappearance day and the *ratha-yātrā* festival with great pomp and splendour.

Later that year, in the month of Kārtika, Śrīla Gurudeva organized a *parikramā* to Śrī Ayodhyā and Naimiṣāraṇya. There, *ūrjā-vrata niyama-sevā* was observed. The pilgrims carried the deity of Śrīman Mahāprabhu on the *parikramā*, and they stopped at Ayodhyā's famous Lakṣmaṇa-kilā (Lakṣmaṇa's fort). This is a charming place on the banks of the sacred river Sarayu, which even today reveals ancient traditions. Śrīla Gurudeva, who was managing the entire *parikramā*, lectured on the glories of the *dhāma*. *Mahopadeśaka* Śrīpāda Narottamānanda Brahmacārī Bhakti-śāstrī Bhakti-kamala Prabhu attracted an audience to hear the *hari-kathā* by using black-and-white slides to illustrate his *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* lectures. Under Śrīla Gurudeva's guidance, the pilgrims took *darśana* of Śrī Rāmacandrajī's birthplace, Śrī Rāma-darbāra, Kanaka-bhavana, Hanumāna-gaḍhī, Dvādaśa Mandira, Vālmīki-bhavana, Darśaneśvarnātha Śiva, Pāpamocana-ghāṭa, Svargadvāra, Nāgeśvara Mahādeva, Brahma-ghāṭa, Śrī Sūrya-kuṇḍa, Goptāra-ghāṭa and other famous places in Ayodhyā-dhāma.

After staying twenty days in Ayodhyā, the *parikramā* party went to Naimiṣāraṇya via Bālāmu Junction. Upon entering Naimiṣāraṇya, they walked in a grand procession accompanied by *saṅkīrtana* to Paramahaṁsa Gauḍīya Maṭha, which had been established by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda. Afterwards they went to a large, local *dharmaśālā* where their residence had been arranged.

At the *dharmaśālā*, Śrīla Gurudeva read from Mahāprabhu's teachings to Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. He explained that it is detrimental for an unqualified person to perform *bhajana* in a secluded place, for unless the *sādhaka* has the association of a superior *tattva-darśī* Vaiṣṇava (a self-realized soul), the name uttered in solitary *bhajana* is always full of offences. Lack of pure association also makes one unable to understand the nature of *śuddha-bhakti*. *Bhajana* in the association of elevated Vaiṣṇavas is actually real solitary *bhajana*. "*Bhaktis tu bhagavad-bhakta-saṅgena parijāyate* – one attains pure *kṛṣṇa-bhakti* by the elevated association of a pure Vaiṣṇava" (*Bṛhan-nāradīya Purāṇa* 4.33).

Neither a *goṣṭhānandī*, a devotee who preaches, nor a *viviktānandī* (*bhajanānandī*), a devotee who engages exclusively in hearing and chanting, performs solitary *bhajana*. This is because even though the *viviktānandī* performs solitary *bhajana*, he assists in the *goṣṭhānandī's* preaching of *śrī nāma-prema* by nourishing a favourable mood.

Śrīman Mahāprabhu's instructions to restore lost places of pilgrimage, to establish

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"Śrīman Mahāprabhu's instructions to restore lost places of pilgrimage, to establish deity worship, to compose *bhakti* literature and to preach *nāma-prema* are not only for Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī; rather, they are clear directions for all *bhakti-sādhakas*. ... Nowadays, many *sādhakas* with weak faith imitate solitary *bhajana*, but they soon stray from the path and fall down from the realm of *bhajana*."

deity worship, to compose *bhakti* literature and to preach *nāma-prema* are not only for Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī; rather, they are clear directions for all *bhakti-sādhakas*. Therefore, Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī and other elevated Vaiṣṇavas would meet together to discuss how to accomplish these tasks. Nowadays, many *sādhakas* with weak faith imitate solitary *bhajana*, but they soon stray from the path and fall down from the realm of *bhajana*.

At Śrī Vyāsa-gaddī in Naimiṣāraṇya, Śrīla Guru Mahārāja gave a profound lecture which delved deeply into *bhagavat-tattva*. He explained this *tattva* directly and indirectly as he described the *bhāgavata guru-paramparā* and the glories of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vedavyāsa. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Śrīla Vedavyāsa's foremost literary composition, is the actual commentary on the *Brahma-sūtra*, the conclusion of *Mahābhārata*, the commentary on *gāyatrī*, and the ripened, nectarean fruit of the Veda, which is like a desire tree. One who has already tasted this nectar can never become attracted to any other scripture. This treatise contains astonishing solutions to all problems pertaining to all people, in all countries, throughout all time. Śrīla Vyāsadeva entered into *samādhi* through *bhakti-yoga*, and in his pure heart he realized the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. It is not just a book, but rather it is Śrī Kṛṣṇa's literary incarnation.

In Naimiṣāraṇya the pilgrims took *darśana* of Brahma-kuṇḍa, Gaṅgotrī, Daśāśvamedha-ghāṭa, Gomatī Gaṅgā, Yajñavaraha-kūpa, Śrī Lakṣmī-Nṛsiṁhadeva, Cakra-tīrtha and other places. In Miśrika-tīrtha they took *darśana* of Sītā-kuṇḍa, Vālmīki-āśrama, the place were Sītā-devī entered Pātāla, Dadhīci Muni's *āśrama* and other places. When the *niyama-sevā kārtika-vrata* was completed, the pilgrims returned to their homes.

Śrī Setubandha Rāmeśvara parikramā and ūrjā-vrata

The following year, 1950, Śrīla Gurudeva, the founder of the Samiti, arranged for approximately two hundred faithful devotees to observe *kārtika-vrata* in South India. Under his guidance, they had the good fortune to visit Setubandha Rāmeśvara and other holy places which had been purified by the footprints of Śrī Gaura.

The devotees began their journey from Howrah station in Kolkata and made their first stop in Purī-dhāma. Then the pilgrims had *darśana* of Siṁhācalam, Maṅgalagiri, Chennai (Madras), Ciṅgalpuṭ, Kaṅjīvaram, Cidambaram, Sīyāli, Māyābharam, Tīrumeḍāmāruḍū, Kummakoṇam, Pāpnāśanam, Tānjor, Rāmeśvaram, Dhanuṣkoḍī,

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Śrī Vaikuṇṭham, Terucaṇḍūr, Kanyā-kumārī, Sucindram, Tīruvantar, Trivendrum, Varkalā, Śaṅkara-nārāyaṇakail, Śrī Milīputtar, Madurā, Pālnī, Śrī Raṅgam, Vṛddhācalam, Tiruminnāmalaī, Tirupati, Tirumalaī, Tirucāṇur and Kalahasī. Finally they arrived at Guṇṭūr Junction, and from there returned to Howrah station. After observing *kārtika-vrata* with a month of *sādhu-saṅga, saṅkīrtana, hari-kathā* and *darśana* of innumerable and incomparably delightful places of pilgrimage that are almost unattainable, all the devotees returned home, overwhelmed with gratitude for Śrī Guru Mahārāja. At the time of departure, they fell at his lotus feet, their eyes brimming with tears, and begged for his blessings: "Please bestow your mercy on us so that we can quickly obtain the association of Vaiṣṇavas and gradually progress on the path of *śuddha-bhakti*."

Śrīla Prabhupāda's viraha-utsava in Ānandapāḍā

On the occasion of *jagad-guru* Śrīla Prabhupāda's disappearance day, 26 December 1950, Śrīla Guru Mahārāja and some fifteen *maṭha* residents preached the message of Śrīman Mahāprabhu for seven days in Śaraṇāthīpallī in Ānandapāḍā, in the district of Chaubīsa Paraganā. The pious people living in the area were very impressed with *paramārādhyatama* Śrīla Gurudeva's exceptional *hari-kathā*. The following is the essence of one of his lectures.

"The majority of you have left East Bengal and have come here to India to protect your *dharma*. The rule of Bhagavān is to always give good fortune to the *jīvas*. The purpose of human life is not simply to arrange for food and clothing. Someone may adopt the behaviour, dress, mannerisms, ways of thinking and ideology of the Yavanas, and then say 'I am a Hindu', but this does not mean that he is really a Hindu. We can only be Hindus by genuinely observing the behaviour and views of the Hindu *sanātana-dharma*. The

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"Each person's house is an *āśrama*. We live there to practise devotion to the Supreme Lord. If we are merely absorbed in eating, sleeping, defending and mating, then staying at home is like residing in hell."

real reason for the misery of Hindu society today is people's lack of faith in and devotion to their own *dharma*. Modern Hindu society has forgotten its culture and is giving up its own personality because of Western education and contact with Westerners. That is the main reason for people's misery today. We Hindus have forgotten to devote our life to *dharma*, so the degradation of Hinduism is inevitable. We have forgotten the instructions and teachings of Śrī Rāma and Śrī Kṛṣṇa and instead we are going in the opposite direction. *Dharma* is a matter of conduct; it is not to be acknowledged only by mouth, but by our actions. Troubled days are before us. If we are indifferent to our *dharma*, we will suffer the consequences.

"Each person's house is an *āśrama*. We live there to practise devotion to the Supreme Lord. If we are merely absorbed in eating, sleeping, defending and mating, then staying at home is like residing in hell. Living in such a situation and being addicted to foods such as onions, garlic, meat and fish, as well as alcohol, smoking, etc., that promote ignorance, the *jīva* will become more opposed to Bhagavān. Therefore, the one and only duty is to reject these things. It is necessary to construct new settlements or villages on the foundation of *dharma*. Without *dharma* the human being becomes like a four-legged animal. Only by means of *dharma* can human beings have both worldly and transcendental happiness."

Preaching sanātana-dharma in Vasīrahāṭa and the reply to Śrī Chaṭṭopādhyāya Mahāśaya's protest

Throughout 1950, Śrīla Guru Mahārāja extensively preached *śrī sanātana-dharma* in Medinīpura, Naraghāṭa, Śītalapura, Haldiyā, Tamaluk, Bājīpura in Chaubīsa Paraganā, Vasīrhāṭa and other places. In the large religious assembly of Vasīrhāṭa, Ācārya Kesarī established with a lion-like voice the philosophical conclusions of *sanātana-dharma* and refuted the worthless, non-Vedic *kevalādvaita-vāda* put forward by the hidden Buddhist, Ācārya Śaṅkara, as well as the modern conclusions opposed to the Veda.

Śrī Gurudeva said that *bhagavad-bhakti*, devotion to the Supreme Lord, is *sanātana-dharma*. The constitutional position of the *jīva* is to be a servant of Bhagavān. Therefore, service of Bhagavān is *sanātana-dharma* in the past, present and future. It is also known as Vedic *dharma*, *bhāgavata-dharma* and *vaiṣṇava-dharma*. The *jīva* and the material world are never false. The *jīva* is eternally a part of Bhagavān, and the material world, which is manifested by Bhagavān's inferior potency (*aparā-prakṛti*), is also true although changeable and perishable. The world is not false or illusory like a dream, or like a rope resembling a snake. The ideas of Śaṅkara, which are illusory and contrary to logic, are only respected by extremely dull-witted people. [Śrī Gurudeva concluded his talk by saying,] "This is what we are teaching the young men of the Vedānta Samiti."

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In *Śrī Gauḍīya-patrikā's* fourth issue, during its second year of publication, a synopsis of the above lecture given by Śrīla Guru Mahārāja was published. After reading the article, Śrī Satyabhūṣaṇa Chaṭṭopādhyāya Mahodaya of Ṭāṭānagara wrote a letter of protest. Śrīla Guru Mahārāja replied to his letter using scriptural logic and *siddhānta*. Śrīla Guru Mahārāja's letter is cited below.

"To summon the well-educated community of the world to attain real realization of the Absolute (*tattva-darśana*) is not to challenge anyone in any way. Careful consideration and comparison has established that the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas' philosophy of simultaneous oneness and difference (*acintya-bhedābheda-siddhānta*) is superior to Ācārya Śaṅkara's *advaita-vāda* or *māyāvāda* (impersonalism). Pure Vaiṣṇavas do not have even the slightest trace of faith in Ācārya Śrī Śaṅkara's views, although we see that some proud, mixed Vaiṣṇavas have faith in *māyāvāda*. We are Vaiṣṇava *sannyāsīs*, and we consider the refinement of society to be part of the purification process of *dharma*. It is our right to present the truth of any subject to the educated community for their welfare. Some people may become disturbed when we preach truth, because they accept non-truth as the truth; but we do not want to agitate anyone. We only want to say that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's teachings and practice are the foremost in the entire world. We do not blaspheme Ācārya Śaṅkara, but we are not about to praise his opinions and doctrines in any way." Śrīla Gurudeva's answers to Śrī Chaṭṭopādhyāya Mahāśaya's many questions about *māyāvāda* were published in instalments in *Śrī Gauḍīya-patrikā*.

Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma parikramā, Śrī Gaura-janmotsava and the deities' entrance into their new residence

In March 1951, the week-long Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma *parikramā* and Śrī Gaura-janmotsava were performed with great pomp. Faithful pilgrims came, not only from Bengal but from all over India. Thanks to Śrīla Guru Mahārāja's excellent management, all the pilgrims engaged in *harināma-saṅkīrtana*, listened to *hari-kathā*, took *darśana* of the places of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's pastimes, and had the good fortune to perform *parikramā*.

Until that time Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha, which is Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti's original *maṭha*, was located in a small rented building. This served as a temple where the deities were worshipped and also as headquarters for the management of the entire Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma *parikramā*. The pilgrims would stay in tents erected in a nearby field. That year the Samiti enclosed the extensive area where the arrangements for the *parikramā* were made with a huge fence. A temple for the deities, quarters for the *sevakas* and a storage place for *bhoga* were constructed. In another part of the field, tents were set up for lodging the many pilgrims. Before the *parikramā*, the deities were brought in a grand procession accompanied by *saṅkīrtana* to their new temple.

The elevated devotee Śrīyuta Haripada dāsa Adhikārī of Śrī Rāmapura in the Hoogly district and his devout wife, Śrīmatī Jñānadā-sundarī-devī, generously financed the construction of the high fences and the temple in the huge field. For their contribution, Śrīla Guru Mahārāja showered them with profuse blessings. Their ideal service is an inspiration for other virtuous people.

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Bābājī-veśa conferred upon Śrīpāda Triguṇātīta Brahmacārī Prabhu

Śrīpāda Triguṇātīta Brahmacārī Prabhu, the manager of Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha, went to the town of Sīdhāvāḍī in the Barddhamān district, to arrange for the construction of *brahmacārī* quarters, etc. in the Siddhavāṭī Gauḍīya Maṭha. After Śrī Gaura-janmotsava 1951, Śrīla Guru Mahārāja went there himself, and on 11 May, the auspicious opening day of the newly built *maṭha*, Śrīla Guru Mahārāja gave *bābājī-veśa* to Śrīpāda Brahmacārījī.

Śrīpāda Triguṇātīta Brahmacārī was a learned and respected member of the famous Mukharajī family (Sir Āśutoṣa Mukharajī) from the village of Jirāṭa-Bālāgaḍha in the district of Hoogly. His previous name was Śrī Triguṇanātha Mukhopādhyāya and after accepting *bābājī-veśa* he became known as Śrīmad Triguṇātīta dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja. A *brahmacārī* since boyhood, he was one of the foremost of *jagad-guru* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's initiated, single-pointed servants. All the service that he faithfully performed to Śrīla Prabhupāda and his Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha Mission was outstanding. It is most worthwhile to sincerely emulate his renunciation, detachment and service attitude. When the *ekaniṣṭha guru-sevaka* Śrīpāda Anaṅga-mohana Brahmacārī was sick, Śrī Triguṇātīta affectionately nursed him in a way that is exemplary for all Vaiṣṇavas, and that is also extremely rare in the world of the Vaiṣṇavas. It has already been mentioned how he donated Śrī Gaurāṅga Press, including all its equipment, to the Samiti.

Preaching śuddha-bhakti

While Śrī Guru Mahārāja was staying at Śrī Siddhavāṭī Gauḍīya Maṭha, he vigorously preached *bhakti* for three days in Pānjanīyā-grāma on the special request of Śrīyuta Bhāgavat dāsa Adhikārī, a resident of the village. After that, Śrīla Gurudeva preached *śrī sanātana vaiṣṇava-dharma* extensively in Kākadvīpa, Kalāracaka, Sarbeḍiyā, Ekatārā, Daimond Harbour, Cāndana-nagara, Mathurāpur, Kāṁśīnagara and other places in the district of Chaubīsa Paraganā.

That same year, during the month of Kārtika, Śrīla Gurudeva performed the eighty-four *kosa* Vraja-maṇḍala *parikramā* and *ūrjā-vrata* for the second time with two hundred *sannyāsīs, brahmacārīs* and *gṛhastha-bhaktas*. The pilgrims left from Howrah station, and after having *darśana* of Gayā, Kāśī, Prayāga and other holy places, they arrived in Mathurā-dhāma. In Gayā they had *darśana* of Śrī Gadādhara-pāda-padma (the lotus feet of Śrī Gadādhara), Phalgu-tīrtha, Bodhagayā and the Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha. In Kāśī they went to Śrī Sanātana *śikṣā-sthalī*, Śrī Viśvanātha Mandira, Veṇī-mādhava, Annapūrṇā, Daśāśvamedha-ghāṭa and Manikarṇikā-ghāṭa. Then in Prayāga they visited Śrī Rūpa Gauḍīya Maṭha, Triveṇī-saṅgama, Śrī Bindu-mādhava, Śrī Rūpa *śikṣā-sthalī*, Daśāśvamedha-ghāṭa and other places.

In Mathurā, the *parikramā* party stayed at the large Helanagañjavālī Dharmaśālā for a few days. During that time they had *darśana* of the famous Viśrāma-ghāṭa, Dvārikādhīśa, Gataśrama-ṭīlā, Dhruva-ṭīlā, Pippaleśvara Mahādeva, Raṅgeśvara Mahādeva, Bhūteśvara Mahādeva, Gokarṇeśvara Mahādeva, Śveta-varāha, Kṛṣṇa-varāha, Sapta-ṛṣi-ṭīlā, Dīrgha-viṣṇu, Śrī Padmanābha, Kṛṣṇa-janmabhūmi (Kṛṣṇa's birthplace), Kaṁsa-kārāgāra (Kaṁsa's prison house) and other places.

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After that, following in the footsteps of Śrīla Prabhupāda, they started Vraja-maṇḍala *parikramā*, visiting the twelve forests and the places in these forests where Kṛṣṇa performed His pastimes. They had *darśana* of the forests on the western bank of the Yamunā, namely, (1) Vṛndāvana, (2) Madhuvana, (3) Tālavana, (4) Kumudavana, (5) Bahulāvana, (6) Kāmyavana and (7) Khadīravana; and the forests on the eastern bank: (8) Bhadravana, (9) Bhāṇḍīravana, (10) Belvana, (11) Lohavana and (12) Mahāvana.

At Śrī Govardhana, a huge *annakūṭa* ceremony was performed, and the pilgrims separately circumambulated Śrī Girirāja, Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa, Śrī Śyāma-kuṇḍa, Vṛndāvana, Nandagrāma and Varsānā. The Samiti arranged *prasāda* and accommodation for all the pilgrims so that their minds would be free to concentrate on hearing classes on the glories of the *dhāma* and on *bhakti*. At the end of the *parikramā* and *vrata*, the pilgrims returned to their respective homes with tears in their eyes.

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The collecting and publishing of Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā-paddhati

In February 1952, *śrī śrī vyāsa-pūjā* was celebrated with great festivities for three days, from Māghī-kṛṣṇā-tṛtīyā to Māghi-pañcamī, at Śrī Uddhāraṇa Gauḍīya Maṭha in Chuṅchurā. On Śrīla Guru Mahārāja's appearance day, he gave valuable instructions in response to the greetings and *puṣpāñjali* of the Vaiṣṇavas. He said, "*Tridaṇḍī-sannyāsīs* should perform *śrī guru-pūjā* [of their own *guru*] on their appearance days. In conjunction with this *guru-pūjā* it is also necessary to worship the *guru-paramparā*, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Yugala and Śacīnandana Śrī Gaurahari and His associates. *Vyāsa-pūjā, guru-pūjā, ācārya-pūjā* and *upāsya-pūjā* are different names for the same principle (*tattva*). The word *kṛṣṇa-pañcaka* does not mean five types of *kṛṣṇa-pūjā*; rather it is a *pūjā* whose objects are Kṛṣṇa's five manifestations (*prakāśas* or *vilāsas*).

"Ācārya Śrī Śaṅkara's *vyāsa-pūjā* is not a true *vyāsa-pūjā*; it is only for show. Vyāsa's *sampradāya* is the foremost in India; India and the Indians are indebted to him. But at the present time the country's educated community is not showing Vyāsa proper respect. This is a very painful matter. Therefore, the Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti is celebrating *śrī vyāsa-pūjā* very enthusiastically in different places of India."

Śrīla Sarasvatī Prabhupāda collected the book *Vyāsa-pūjā-paddhati* from [Śrī Śaṅkara's] Śrī Govardhana Maṭha in Purī. Śrīla Guru Mahārāja also collected the same *paddhati* from Brahma Maṭha in Puṣkara and Śāradā Maṭha of Gomati Dvārakā. He published Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's revised and modified edition in the third issue of the fourth year of *Śrī Gauḍīya-patrikā*. To this day, all *maṭhas* of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti, and especially the original *maṭha*, Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha in Navadvīpa, celebrate *śrī vyāsa-pūjā* according to this *paddhati*.

Awarding aṣṭottara-śata-nāmi tridaṇḍa-sannyāsa

In 1952, the week-long Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma *parikramā* and Śrī Gaura-janmotsava took place with great festivity, from 6 March to 12 March. On Gaura-pūrṇimā day (Monday, 11 March) at Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha, the founder and president of the Samiti, *parivrājakācārya aṣṭottara-śata* Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, gave Vedic *tridaṇḍa-sannyāsa* dress to Śrī Sajjana-sevaka Brahmacārī, the publisher of *Śrī Gauḍīya-patrikā*; to Śrī Rādhānātha dāsa Adhikārī, the *Patrika's* office manager; and to Śrī Gaura-nārāyaṇa dāsa Adhikārī Bhakta-bāndhava [the author], the *Patrikā's* preaching manager. The *aṣṭottara-śata-nāmī tridaṇḍa-sannyāsa* dress was given according to the accepted regulations for Vaiṣṇava practice (*vaiṣṇava-sāttvata-smṛti*). Their *sannyāsa* names were *tridaṇḍi-svāmī* Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Mahārāja[4], *tridaṇḍi-svāmī* Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Trivikrama Mahārāja[5] and *tridaṇḍi-svāmī* Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja[6], respectively.

The *sannyāsa* title 'Bhaktivedānta' preceding each of the *sannyāsa* names was completely unheard of until that day. The president of Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti – whose nature is identical to that of Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, who composed

4 Editor: see Appendix page 395
5 Editor: see Appendix page 397
6 Editor: see 'About the Author' page 405

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the *Govinda-bhāṣya* on *Brahma-sūtra* – inundated the earth with the flow of *gauḍīya-vedānta*. *Gauḍīya-vedānta* is non-different from *bhakti-vedānta*. Its purport is established in the *pāramahaṁsī saṁhitā*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, which is the authentic commentary on *Brahma-sūtra*. Non-envious, knowledgeable Vaiṣṇavas, expert in extracting the essence, realize the very deep secrets regarding the fundamental truths about *bhakti* through *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

On Phālguna-pūrṇimā, the appearance day of Śrī Gaura, the devotees fasted from morning onward. The entire *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata* was read throughout the day, and *saṅkīrtana* was performed. Sometimes local Navadvīpa residents entered the *maṭha* compound, stained with the bright colours of Holi, singing Holi songs accompanied by *ḍholak* and small cymbals, and throwing showers of coloured powder. Joining the *saṅkīrtana*, they performed *parikramā* of the deities, took *darśana* of Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga Rādhā-Vinoda-bihārī and Śrī Koladeva and then left. The *maṭha* pilgrims had bathed in the Gaṅgā and were dressed in new clothes. Carrying coloured powder in their hands, they first offered it to Śrī Mandira, then they offered *praṇāma* to *guru* and Vaiṣṇavas, and with great love they met with each other.

Mid-morning, the rituals of *ḍor-kaupīna* and *daṇḍa* were performed, followed by the giving of *sannyāsa*, a fire sacrifice and other rituals. These were all done according to the rules of the *vaiṣṇava-smṛti*, *Saṁskāra-dīpikā*. The sky was filled with the sound of *saṅkīrtana*



Śrī Ācārya Kesarī's first *sannyāsī* disciples:
Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa, Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana, Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Trivikrama

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and *jaya-dhvanī* (jubilant cries of "*Jaya*!"), and the atmosphere was beautified by the deep reverberation of the conch shells and the auspicious *ulū* sounds made by the ladies. On this glorious occasion, *tridaṇḍi-svāmī* Śrīla Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja gave the *sannyāsa-mantra* and the *aṣṭottara-śata sannyāsī* names, names indicative of *bhakti*, to his three initiated servants in front of an audience of thousands of faithful people. After the ceremony, on the order of Śrīla Guru Mahārāja, the new *tridaṇḍi-yatis* went out to beg alms, as befitting one in the *sannyāsa-āśrama*. Following the rules of that *āśrama*, they offered everything they received – grains, money, flowers and fruits – to the lotus feet of their *guru*.

In the evening, in an assembly filled with innumerable pilgrims, the three new *sannyāsīs* astonished their audience by explaining the profound truths and philosophical conclusions of *śuddha-bhakti*.

Preaching śuddha-bhakti in Assam

In April 1952, *paramārādhyatama* Ācārya Kesarī travelled to the state of Assam to preach Śrīman Mahāprabhu's *prema-dharma* in various places. He was accompanied by *tridaṇḍi-svāmī* Śrīmad Bhakti Kuśala Nārasiṁha Mahārāja, Śrīmad Dāmodara Mahārāja, Śrīmad Trivikrama Mahārāja, Śrīmad Vāmana Mahārāja, Śrīmad Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja [the author], Śrī Parameśvara Brahmacārī, Śrī Satya-vigraha dāsa Adhikārī, Śrī Sudāma Sakhā dāsa Adhikārī, Śrī Dhīra-kṛṣṇa Brahmacārī and others. Śrīla Guru Mahārāja and the preaching party first visited the house of Śrīmatī Sucitra Bālā-devī in Goloka-gañja. Then they preached very strongly in the town of Dhūvaḍī, where they stayed at the residence of the late *pūjyapāda* Nimānanda Sevā-tīrtha Prabhu. Afterwards, on the special invitation of respected Śrī G. N. Niyogī Mahodaya, the chief minister of the kingdom of Abhaypurī, Śrīla Gurudeva gave an impressive lecture on Hindu *dharma* in the Bijanī royal palace of Abhayapurī. From there, Śrīla Gurudeva went to the village of Bhāṭīpāḍā on the entreaty of the members of the Assam Vaiṣṇava Assembly. Thereafter he delivered a very powerful lecture on *sanātana-dharma* and Mahāprabhu's philosophy at a huge gathering at Gāndhī Maidan in the village of Boṅgāī.

After this, Śrīla Gurudeva went to Mālīgaon, a large, important township in Assam, on the insistence of Śrī Yādavendra dāsa and Premānanda dāsa. Mālīgaon is the stronghold of a community which is completely against the philosophy of Śrī Caitanya. The majority of the people there worship Kṛṣṇa as *niḥśaktik* (without potencies), and do not accept His deity form. They do not acknowledge Śrī Vyāsadeva's *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* as authoritative but rather favour the modern *Bhagavatpothī*, written in Assamese by Haṅkaradeva. They eat fish, meat, onions and garlic and drink alcohol. They are against Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's philosophy of pure *bhakti* and are antagonistic to pure Vaiṣṇavas.

One evening, a huge public assembly was arranged for Śrīla Ācārya Kesarī and his group of followers. The grounds were packed with ten to twelve thousand people waiting for Śrīla Gurudeva's lecture. Śrīla Gurudeva began to speak on pure *sanātana-dharma*, with a brilliant command of words typical of him.

"Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the complete, eternal *brahma* in His features of *sarva-śaktimān* (being the possessor of all potencies), *saviśeṣa* (possessing all transcendental qualities) and *akhila-rasāmṛta-mūrti* (being the personification

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of all *rasas*). The pure *bhakti* that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu preached and practised is actually *sanātana-dharma* in its complete form. The supreme duty of human life is to completely give up onions, garlic, meat, intoxication, etc., and follow the path of *sanātana-dharma*, which is *śuddha-bhakti*. The life of those who go against this highest duty and take meat, intoxication and other impure substances is like that of an animal – *dharmeṇa hīnāḥ paśubhiḥ samānāḥ* (*Hitopadeśa* 25)." Upon hearing this, one person in the middle of the gathering stood up and loudly declared, "We don't believe in the philosophy of Caitanya Mahāprabhu."

Gurudeva replied, "Not only Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, but the Vedas, Upaniṣads, Purāṇas and all other *śāstras* say the same thing. No authentic scripture gives a concession for meat-eating and intoxication. Bhagavān is not *nirākara*, formless. His beautiful form is unprecedented. Despite having a form, He is still all-pervading and omnipotent."

One listener said, "That is not written in Haṅkaradeva's *Bhāgavata*. We do not accept this *siddhānta*; we consider Haṅkaradeva's *Bhāgavata* to be authoritative."

Gurudeva explained, "Haṅkaradeva's *Bhāgavata* is a modern literature, written only two hundred or two hundred and fifty years ago. The Vedas, Upaniṣads, Purāṇas and other *śāstras* are divine, eternal and ever-existing. That is why they are actual evidence."

The listener asked, "Śrīman Mahāprabhu is a recent personality, and *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* is also modern literature. Is Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's name mentioned in the Vedas? Is there supporting evidence in the Vedas that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is Bhagavān?"

Gurudeva said, "Yes, there is evidence. Not only one but thousands of examples are there. Listen carefully." He looked at Śrīla Vāmana Mahārāja, indicating that he should present the evidence. Śrīpāda Vāmana Mahārāja had written in his notebook forty to fifty scriptural statements that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is Bhagavān, and he gave this to Śrīpāda Trivikrama Mahārāja who, on Śrīla Gurudeva's order, started to read the examples of evidence loudly. However, the opposition was not interested in hearing proof, but, wanting to instigate chaos in the gathering instead, they started throwing stones. Other members of the audience objected to such behaviour. Gurujī fearlessly continued with his lecture throughout this disruption. He said, "We *sannyāsīs* and *brahmacārīs* are not afraid of death. We are followers of Śrī Prahlāda Mahārāja and Śrī Haridāsa Ṭhākura." After the scriptural proofs had been read, the gathering came to an end. Śrī Gurudeva's fearlessness was discussed everywhere for many days. Such a fearless speaker of the impartial truth is rare in this world.

After preaching in Mālīgaon, Śrīla Guru Mahārāja was requested to speak by the pious members of a religious assembly in the village of Bāṁsvāḍī. He gave a penetrating talk about the philosophical concepts that distinguish Gauḍīya *vaiṣṇava-dharma* from the different *apasampradāyas*, or unauthorized philosophical schools. Thereafter he and the preaching party travelled to Gauhāṭī. At various places in the town, Śrīla Gurudeva gave lectures filled with scriptural explanations of Śrīman Mahāprabhu's *prema-dharma* and the subject matter established in Vedānta. While preaching in Gauhāṭī, very praiseworthy services were rendered by Śrī Gaurī-śaṅkara Chaṭṭopādhyāya (a Divisional Medical Officer of Assam's Railway), by Śrī M. Salaī (a lecturer at Gauhāṭī College) and others.

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Darśana of Śrī Jagannāthajī's ratha-yātrā in Śrī Jagannātha Purī



Later that year, during the month of Āṣāḍha (June–July), almost two hundred and fifty pilgrims under the leadership of Śrī Guru Mahārāja left Howrah station in a reserved coach and headed first for the Bāleśvara railway station and from there to Śrī Remunā. In Remunā they took *darśana* of Śrī Kṣīra-corā Gopīnāthajī. Śrīla Guru Mahārāja recounted the pastime of Śrī Mādhavendra Purī and Kṣīra-corā Gopīnātha as told in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*.

"Śrī Mādhavendra Purī is the first sprout of the desire tree of *bhakti-rasa*. Śrī Nāthajī was so satisfied with Śrī Mādhavendra Purī's service that He appeared on the slopes of Śrī Govardhana near the village of Ānyora. Śrī Mādhavendra Purī fulfilled Śrī Nāthajī's desire by worshipping Him for one month with *abhiṣeka* and *annakūṭa* festival with extensive offerings of *bhoga*. Thereafter, also by the desire of Śrī Gopālajī, Mādhavendra Purī walked from Vṛndāvana to Jagannātha Purī to procure Malayan *candana* (sandalwood) to offer to Śrī Nāthajī. On the way to Purī, he arrived here in Remunā in the late evening. *Bhoga* had been offered to Ṭhākurajī. The curtain opened and he had *darśana* of the astonishing deity of Śrī Gopīnāthajī. In front of the deity were pots of *kṣīra-prasāda*, condensed milk. Such a wonderful fragrance was coming from the *kṣīra* offered to Ṭhākurajī that Śrī Mādhavendra Purī's mind became attracted. He thought, 'If I could taste only a little of the *prasāda*, I could prepare such a delicious *kṣīra* for my Śrī Nāthajī.' Meanwhile, the curtain closed. Śrī Purī Gosvāmī then went to some place in the nearby market to perform *bhajana*. At night he heard a voice calling out, 'Who is Mādhavendra Purī?' Śrī Gopīnāthajī's *pujārī* was calling him in a loud voice. Śrī Mādhavendra Purī stood up and said, 'I am Mādhavendra. Why are you calling me?'

"With great humility, the *pujārī* placed a pot of *kṣīra* in Mādhavendra Purī's hands and said, 'Great soul, after I put Śrī Gopīnāthajī to bed, I

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closed the curtain and went to sleep in my small room. At midnight Śrī Ṭhākurajī came to me in a dream and said, 'My devotee is performing *bhajana* somewhere in the market. I wanted him to taste some of My *prasāda*, but he never asks anyone for anything. He is a topmost *niṣkiñcana* Vaiṣṇava who never begs for his living. I have hidden one of the twelve pots of *kṣīra* for him under My clothes. Take it and give it to him now.' After this dream I woke up, opened up the curtain and went inside the temple. It is most amazing! One pot was there inside Ṭhākurajī's clothes. I had removed the offered pots and purified the altar with my own hands. How could one pot remain in spite of this? I closed Ṭhākurajī's door again and brought the pot here to you. Never before have I experienced such a thing as this.'

"Śrī Mādhavendra Purī also became very joyful and happy when he heard this, but he thought, 'Everyone will know about this incident in the morning and a crowd will come here for my *darśana*.' Fearing this fame, he fled Remunā in the dark for Jagannātha Purī. In this world such a devotee is exceptional and blessed. From that time, the name of Śrī Gopīnāthajī was changed to Śrī Kṣīra-corā Gopīnātha – Gopīnātha who steals the condensed milk.

"Mādhavendra Purījī reached Śrī Purī-dhāma and took *darśana* of Śrī Jagannātha. He then obtained the Malayan sandalwood for his Gopālajī, put it [in a basket] on his head and started walking back towards Śrī Vṛndāvana-dhāma. On the way, he came to Kṣīra-corā Gopīnātha's Remunā again. It was night and he soon dozed off. Gopālajī came to him in a dream and told him, 'Stay in Remunā and rub the Malayan *candana* on Gopīnātha's whole body. If you perform this service, the heat of My body will also be removed, because I am that same Gopīnātha.' Śrī Purī Gosvāmī did so, and after receiving Śrī Gopāla's permission he again returned to Vṛndāvana. Bhagavān is conscious of the hardships that His devotees undergo to serve Him, and He performs such transcendental pastimes to increase the glory of His devotees in this world."

The pilgrims were fascinated by this pastime. After listening to the story, they took *darśana* of Śrī Rasikānandajī's *samādhi* nearby. Then they visited Bhubaneśvara, where they took *darśana* of Śrī Liṅgarāja, Śrī Ananta Vāsudeva, Bindu-sarovara and other places. Finally they reached Śrī Purī-dhāma. They stayed in Purī for fifteen days and took *darśana* of Ālālanātha, Sākṣī-gopāla, Koṇārka and other places. On Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's disappearance day they were invited to a large assembly in the Śrī Jagannātha-vallabha garden. Śrīla Gurudeva, the president of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti, gave a splendid philosophical lecture full of *tattva* concerning Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's transcendental character, his erudition and the *bhakti-śāstras* that he composed. The learned scholars of Purī were very impressed by this lecture.

The next day was *śrī guṇḍicā-mārjana*, after which came *śrī ratha-yātrā*, *śrī herā-pañcamī*, Śrī Jagannātha's return *yātrā* and so on. Everything was observed with *kīrtana* and lectures. The pilgrims also had the opportunity to have *darśana* of Śrī Jagannātha, Gambhīrā, Siddha-bakula, Haridāsa Ṭhākura's *samādhi*, Ṭoṭā Gopīnātha, Caṭaka-parvata, Yameśvara Ṭoṭā, Lokanātha Śiva, Purī Gosvāmī's well, Narendra-sarovara, Indradyumna-sarovara, Guṇḍicā Mandira, Cakra-tīrtha, Svargadvāra and various other places. In the end, everyone returned home fully satisfied with the wonderful *hari-kathā* they had heard and the beautiful *darśanas* they had received.

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Śrī Janmāṣṭamī-vrata and Śrī Nandotsava in Chuṅchurā Maṭha

Some time later, in August (Śrāvaṇa), Śrī Janmāṣṭamī was celebrated with great festivities at the Samiti's preaching centre, Śrī Uddhāraṇa Gauḍīya Maṭha. All the devotees in the *maṭha*, both renunciants and householders, observed fasting without water (*nirjala upavāsa*) the whole day until midnight. The Tenth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* was read during the entire day. At midnight, the time of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's appearance, *mahābhiṣeka* of the deities was performed, *bhoga* was offered and then *arcana* according to tradition. Śrīla Guru Mahārāja gave a lecture on Śrī Janmāṣṭamī filled with philosophical conclusions, to the assembled audience. The essence of his lecture is as follows.

"Śrī Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava literature distinguishes between Śrī Bhagavān's *janma* (birth) and His *āvirbhāva* (appearance). The word *āvirbhāva* is filled with opulence, but *janma* is filled with sweetness (*mādhurya*). We are related to Śrī Kṛṣṇa who is Vrajendra-nandana (the son of the king of Vraja), Nanda-tanuja (the son of Nanda), Nandātmaja (the offspring of Nanda) and Paśupāṅgaja (the son of the king of the cowherds). Śrīla Cakravartī Ṭhākura has addressed Śrī Kṛṣṇa, '*ārādhyo bhagavān vrajeśa-tanaya* – Bhagavān Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa is my worshipful object,' and Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has said in His *Śikṣāṣṭaka*, *ayi nanda-tanuja*. Also by the name Śrī Vāsudeva we understand it to mean Nanda-tanuja, the son of Nanda. Vāsudeva Kṛṣṇa appeared in Mathurā; He did not take birth. He appeared in Kaṁsa's prison before Devakī and Vasudeva fully dressed and decorated, holding His conch, disc, club and lotus. Therefore Śrī Kṛṣṇa is not addressed as Vasudeva-tanuja, the son of Vasudeva. The cutting of the umbilical cord and other ceremonies of childbirth were not performed in Mathurā, but rather in Gokula. There, Kṛṣṇa took birth from the womb of Yaśodā-maiyā, and we worship Śrī Kṛṣṇa's birth-pastime.

"Śrī Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava literature distinguishes between Śrī Bhagavān's *janma* (birth) and His *āvirbhāva* (appearance). The word *āvirbhāva* is filled with opulence, but *janma* is filled with sweetness."

kṛṣṇera yateka khelā, sarvottama nara-līlā,
nara-vapu tāhāra svarūpa

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta
(*Madhya-līlā* 21.101)

Lord Kṛṣṇa has many pastimes, of which His pastimes as a human being are the best. His form as a human being is the supreme transcendental form. *

"Only *śrī rūpānuga* Vaiṣṇavas are able to take to heart this distinctive aspect – filled with *mādhurya* – of birth (*janma*) and appearance (*āvirbhāva*). We are praying to Nanda-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa under the guidance of the *śrī rūpānuga* Vaiṣṇavas." The audience was very impressed when they heard Śrī Guru Mahārāja's profound discussion of *bhakti*.

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Śrī Badrikāśrama and Kedāranātha parikramā

The next month, Śrī Gurudeva led yet another *parikramā*, this time to Śrī Badrikāśrama. On 4 September 1952, a group of one hundred pilgrims departed from Howrah station in a reserved coach. At first they stopped in Haridvāra for a few days and had *darśana* of the local places of pilgrimage, such as Harakī Pauḍī, Kanakhala and Satī-dāha-sthala (the place where Satī gave up her body). From there they went to Ṛṣikeśa and stayed in the Bābā Kālī Kamalīvālī Dharmaśālā. They organized the walking pilgrimage to Kedāra and Badrī, and arranged for all the supplies, including luggage, food, water and bedding, to be carried by local porters. After that, they began their pilgrimage on foot. Śrī Gaurasundara led the way on a handsomely decorated palanquin. After Him came the *saṅkīrtana* party with *sannyāsīs* and *brahmacārīs*. *Gṛhastha-bhaktas*, both men and women, followed, walking with *kīrtana*. Those who could not walk rode on hired horses. The local people had never before seen such a big *parikramā* party. They glorified the beautiful procession and praised the party's orderly management.

The pilgrims walked for almost forty-five days. They had *darśana* of Ṛṣikeśa, Lakṣmaṇa-jhūlā, Vyāsa-ghāṭa, Deva-prayāga, Kīrtinagara, Śrī-nagara, Rudra-prayāga, Agastamuni, Candrapurī, Gupta-kāśī, Ukhī Maṭha, Maikhaṇḍā, Rāmapura, Triyugī-nārāyaṇa, Sona-prayāga, Mandākinī, Muṇḍakāṭā-gaṇeśa, Gaurī-kuṇḍa, Kedāranātha, Tuṅganātha, Ākāśa-gaṅgā, Gopeśvara, Vaitariṇī-kuṇḍa, Pīpalkoṭhī, Garuḍa-gaṅgā, Pātāla-gaṅgā, Jośī Maṭha, Pañcabadrī, Pañcaśilā, Viṣṇu-prayāga, Pāṇḍukeśvara, Hanumān Caṭṭī, Śrī Badrī-nārāyaṇa, Tapta-kuṇḍa, Vasudhārā, Cāmolī, Nanda-prayāga, Ādibadrī and other places, which were all very difficult to reach.

Nowadays, the sacred *tīrthas* in the mountains above Ṛṣikeśa are accessible by bus or car, but at that time there were no sealed roads, and it was impossible to reach them except on foot. From time to time there was danger that boulders would fall on the narrow, winding paths. A few times during our pilgrimage, this actually happened. All of a sudden a rock would drop from the cliffs into the middle of the group, but by Śrī Bhagavān's mercy no accident happened. Disregarding these incidents, the walking pilgrims, with the sympathy and help of the local people, had the unparalleled opportunity to view the beautiful nature and take bath in the pure, sacred waters of the *kuṇḍas* at the places of pilgrimage. None of this is possible on today's bus pilgrimages.

Deva-prayāga is the confluence of the Bhāgīrāthī and the Alakānandā. The current of these two rivers is so swift that it breaks a straw into many pieces. From Deva-prayāga, Bhagavatī Gaṅgā slowly begins her descent to the plains. By the time she reaches Haridvāra, she is flowing on level ground. Kīrtinagara and Śrīnagara are two charming towns in valleys between arms of the mountains. Here, there are big *dharmaśālās* and resting places for pilgrims. Triyugī-nārāyaṇa and Tuṅganātha are two almost inaccessible places that are always covered with snow. The sacrificial fire that was lit for the wedding of Pārvatī and Śaṅkara is still burning at Gaurī-kuṇḍa to this day, and the pilgrims offered oblations into it. The path to Kedārnātha was almost impassable, although it is more accessible today.

It was evening when we reached Śrī Kedāranātha with Śrī Gurujī. Snow was falling like cotton from the sky. The pilgrims were shivering from cold, but we had a magnificent

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view of Kedaranāthajī. On our return, fires were made and everyone warmed up. There was concern about the cold affecting the health of some of the pilgrims, but the fires protected them. Everyone took *prasāda* and then fell asleep covered with three or four quilts. In the morning, the party took bath, performed *sandhyā-ahnika*, honoured some *prasāda*, and then departed for Badrī-nārāyaṇa.

Jośī Maṭha, a famous *maṭha* established by Ādi Śaṅkara Ācārya, is a charming place situated in a valley surrounded by many mountains. Camolī is a significant town through which pilgrims go to Badrī-nārāyaṇa or pass on the trek from Badrī-nārāyaṇa to Kedārnāthajī. Some pilgrims go directly from Ṛṣikeśa to Kedāranāthajī's *darśana*, and from there pass through Camolī on the way to Badrī-nārāyaṇa. They then return to Camolī, and from there to Ṛṣikeśa.

The best and safest time for the Kedāra-Badrī pilgrimage is the month of Bhādra. On our pilgrimage, the *parikramā* party generally stayed overnight at Bābā Kālī Kamalīvālī *dharmaśālās*. Most of the places worth seeing are on the banks of Alakānandā.

Śrīla Gurudeva orchestrated the entire *parikramā*. Every day he went to sleep after everyone else, woke everyone up, made the arrangements for the coming day and was ready before everyone else. Śrīmad Bhakti Kuśala Nārasiṁha Mahārāja took the pilgrims for *darśana*, etc. Śrīpāda Svādhikārānanda Brahmacārī (Śrīmad Kṛṣṇadāsa Bābājī)[7] performed *kīrtana* with *mṛdaṅga* right behind Ṭhākurajī's palanquin and also made others perform *kīrtana*. I [the author] made the preparations for the daily worship of Śrī Gaurasundara, managed the facilities for the pilgrims, and supervised the porters who carried the luggage and supplies from one place to another. Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Mahārāja took care of the lamps, and Sudāma Sakhā Brahmacārī was in charge of *prasāda* and making other comfortable arrangements for the pilgrims.

After staying in the lap of the Himālayas for forty-five long days, performing *kīrtana* and hearing the glories of Śrī Badrī-nārāyaṇa and other sacred places, the pilgrims returned to Howrah and from there to their own places. No one is ever being able to forget the scenic beauty of the Himālayas, so how can these faithful pilgrims ever cease to remember their experience? At the time of parting, everyone offered prayers at the lotus feet of Śrīla Gurudeva with grateful hearts and tear-filled eyes.

Śrī puruṣottama-vrata

According to the instruction of Vaiṣṇava Ācārya Śrīla Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda, members and followers of the Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti observe *puruṣottama-vrata* like *kārtika-vrata*. Two essays regarding the month of Puruṣottama are published in *Śrī Gauḍīya-patrikā's* fourth and fifth issues in the second year. One is about the greatness of the Puruṣottama month and the other gives instructions on how to observe it. Unfortunately, the *smārta* calendar completely disregards this observance.

The two essays mentioned describe two kinds of literature: *smārta* and transcendental (*pāramārthika*). According to the *smārta śāstra*, *karma* is the predominating factor, and the special month of Puruṣottama is a leap month

7 Editor: see Appendix page 399

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when no religious activities should be observed. Therefore it is also called *malmās*, an impure month. But in transcendental scriptures, this leap month is described as being topmost in all respects and supremely helpful for *hari-bhajana*.

These two essays relate many significant stories and give much important information regarding this leap month, such as the eminence of the leap month; the reason for calling it Puruṣottama; the history of Draupadī in the section describing the greatness of the month; the story of King Dṛḍhādhavā narrated by Vālmīki; the rules for bathing in the month of Puruṣottama; the injunction that the only observance for Puruṣottama is worship of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa; proper and improper things to do during the *vrata*; the transcendental observances for devotees who are *svaniṣṭha* (who follow rules and prohibitions of *varṇāśrama* and endeavour to please Hari), *paraniṣṭha* (who follow Vaiṣṇava standards only, discarding *varṇāśrama* rules), and *nirapekṣa* (renounced); single-pointed Vaiṣṇavas' natural interest in the month and what is proper to do; the revelation that the leap month is dear to the devotees because it is free from the miseries of *karma-kāṇḍa*; what is *haviṣyānna*[8]; what is prohibited and what is proper conduct during the *vrata*; what *āmiṣa* (non-vegetarian) is; the result of hearing *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and observing the *vrata*; the offering of lamps and its greatness; what is appropriate to do on Caturdaśī, Aṣṭamī, Navamī of *kṛṣṇa-pakṣa*; *arghya-mantra* and *namaskāra-mantra*; *nīrājana-*, *dhyāna-* and *puṣpāñjali-mantra*; and the last observances of the *vrata* and rules for breaking the vow.

This year, the majority of the Vaiṣṇavas observed *puruṣottama-vrata* from the first day of Vaiśākha until the thirtieth day of Vaiśākha, in accordance with the rules and regulations in line with the *Śrī Māyāpura-pañjikā—Śrī Caitanya-pañjikā* published by Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti. It was especially observed like this in Siddhavāṭī Gauḍīya Maṭha. *Gṛhastha-bhaktas* and their families from various places in Bihāra also participated in this *vrata*.

Re-establishing the Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Catuṣpāṭhī

Śrī Madana-mohana dāsa Adhikārī was a rich, respected, gifted and very religious person from Vaiṁcīgrāma, Hoogly district. He repeatedly requested Śrīla Guru Mahārāja to come to his home, since he wanted pure *bhakti* to be preached in that area. Satisfying him, Gurudeva arrived there in June 1953, together with Śrīmad Nārasiṁha Mahārāja (the editor of *Śrī Gauḍīya-patrikā*), Śrīmad Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja (*Patrikā's* preaching manager) [the author], Śrīmad Paramārthī Mahārāja, Śrīmad Trivikrama Mahārāja and some *brahmacārīs*. For five days various speakers gave lectures on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *śuddha-bhakti* in large religious assemblies. Dr. Siddeśvara Bhaṭṭācārya (MA), who was the vice-principal of Viśva Bhāratī University and who had been a lecturer at the School of Oriental Studies in London, discussed Śaṅkara Vedānta or *māyāvāda* philosophy with Śrī Gurudeva for two hours. Śrīla Guru Mahārāja used scriptural evidence and irrefutable logic to show that the *māyāvāda* philosophy which Ācārya Śaṅkara established is insubstantial and is opposed to *śāstra*. At the same time he established that Ācārya Śaṅkara's liberation (*mukti*) is false and that Ācārya Śaṅkara

8 Editor: a special preparation for observing *vratas*, made of rice, milk and ghee, and without any salt or spices

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Śrīla Ācārya Kesarī explaining Vedānta

was not able to obtain such *mukti* himself. When the honourable vice-principal heard Ācārya Kesarī's deep views supported by *śāstra*, he was astonished and became speechless. After that, Śrīla Gurudeva preached in nearby Pāṇḍuyā, Muṭukpura and other places and afterwards returned to Chuṅchurā Maṭha.

On 29 September 1953, Śrīla Gurudeva re-established Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Catuṣpāṭhī in Śrī Uddhāraṇa Gauḍīya Maṭha. This Sanskrit Catuṣpāṭhī had been run previously by Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti at 32/2 Bospāḍā Lane, Bāgbāzār, Kolkata. It had taught *Harināmāmṛta-vyākaraṇa* (Sanskrit grammar system composed by Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī) and *kāvya* (poetry), and many students had passed their examinations with distinction. Śrīla Gurudeva gave a brief lecture.



Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Catuṣpāṭhī

"In the present age, Sanskrit education is being disrespected, but without Sanskrit the welfare

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of the people is impossible. The word 'Sanskrit' means 'refined'. People who do not know Sanskrit are not qualified to study Vedic knowledge; they are also unqualified for higher education. Higher education means the worship of Bhagavān. In this worship, the language, *dīkṣā, mantras*, the *mahā-mantra* and so on are all in Sanskrit. Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Catuṣpāṭhī is open to all for the eternal liberation of the conditioned souls and for the expression of transcendental moods in most refined language.

"*Jagad-guru* Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī composed a transcendental Sanskrit grammar called *Śrī Harināmāmṛta-vyākaraṇa* to educate young people. Reading and studying *Śrī Harināmāmṛta-vyākaraṇa* is provided to awaken the memory of Śrīla Gosvāmīpāda in the heart of all *jīvas*. An important aphorism in this *vyākaraṇa* is '*nārāyaṇādudbhūto 'yaṁ varṇakramaḥ* – all *varṇas* are born from Nārāyaṇa'. There is no difference between the *varṇa* (letter) of a word and the *varṇa* (caste) of the *jīvas*. Therefore, creation, destruction and so forth are explained by *nāmvādī* or *sphoṭvādī* words. In the *viśuddha* Sārasvata line (coming from Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda), even those who are born in low and untouchable families can become qualified to perform transcendental service for Śrīman Mahāprabhu.

"The *prākṛta-sahajiyā*[9] *sampradāya* is an offender at Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī's lotus feet and is also a great enemy of Śrīman Mahāprabhu. Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti will drive the outcaste and demoniac conceptions of these pretenders far away through the education given by Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Catuṣpāṭhī."

On the very first day of the inauguration of the Catuṣpāṭhī, nine jewels – nine brilliant students – were singled out, who in the future would be revealed as the real preachers of *navadhā-bhakti*.

Śrī Avantikā (Ujjayinī) and Nāsika parikramā

On 20 October 1953, Śrīla Gurudeva left from Howrah station with *sannyāsī, brahmacārī* and *gṛhastha* devotees to observe *kārtika-vrata niyama-sevā* in Śrī Avantikā, Nāsika and other famous pilgrimage places. Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja [the author], Sudāma Sakhā Brahmacārī and others went with him to take care of the pilgrims. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu had previously travelled through all these places.

The *parikramā* party first took *darśana* of Śrī Kurmadeva in Kurmāñcalam. This is the very place where Śrī Jagannāthajī placed the sleeping Śrī Rāmānujācārya when He removed him from Purī. While Śrī Rāmānuja Ācārya was staying in Purī, he had prohibited the *pujārīs* of Purī from serving Śrī Jagannāthajī because of their chewing of betel, smoking and other bad habits. The *pujārīs* fasted for several days and prayed to Śrī Jagannāthajī in a distressed mood, "*He* Jagannāthajī! You are our everything. We have surrendered unto You. Without serving You we cannot stay alive." Hearing their prayers Śrī Jagannāthajī removed the mental agony of the *pujārīs* by transporting the sleeping Śrī Rāmānuja Ācārya along with his bed at night and put him here in Kurmāñcalam. When Śrī Rāmānuja Ācārya woke up in the morning, he

9 Editor: The *prākṛta-sahajiyās*, while pretending to espouse the conception of transcendental reality, are actually absorbed in the material realm, since they consider the transcendental reality to be born of the mundane and behave with the Transcendental Entity as they behave with the mundane.

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thought he was in a Śiva temple and became very sad.[10] But Śrī Kūrmadeva consoled him saying, "I am not a Śiva *liṅga*, but Kūrmadeva." Hearing this voice from the sky, Śrī Rāmānuja Ācārya felt great relief and performed *pūjā* of Kūrmadeva.

Next the pilgrims reached Kabūr (Vidyā-nagara) on the banks of Godāvarī. This is where the transcendental dialogue took place between Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Rāya Rāmānanda, as described in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. After that they visited Paṇḍharpur, the site of the famous Paṇḍharnātha temple. Śrī Viśvarūpa Prabhu came here after taking *sannyāsa*, and entered *aprakaṭa-līlā* on the banks of the nearby river Bhīmā. Later, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu also came here in search of Śrī Viśvarūpa Prabhu. From here the pilgrims went on to Nāsika via Kolhāpur, Mumbā-devī (Mumbai) and Nāsika Road. In Nāsika they took bath in Godāvarī and had *darśana* of Paṅcavaṭī, the place where Sūrpaṇakhā's nose was cut off, the place where Mārīci was killed, and various other places, and then they reached Avantikā. There they bathed in the river Chiprā and took *darśana* of various different temples, as well as Sandīpanī Muni's *āśrama*, where Śrī Baladeva and Kṛṣṇa together with Sudāmā Vipra, learned all arts. From here the *parikramā* party went via Ḍākorjī, Nāthadvārā, Puṣkara, Jaipur, Karaulī, Vṛndāvana, Citrakūṭa and Prayāga, and reached Howrah after a total of thirty-eight days. Then the pilgrims returned to their respective places.

Preaching sanātana-dharma in Śrī Rāmapura, Hoogly

On 15 December 1953, Śrī Ācārya Kesarī visited the home of Haripāda dāsa Adhikārī, a resident of Śrī Rāmapura, upon his earnest request. Śrīla Gurudeva was accompanied by Śrīmad Bhakti Kuśala Nārasiṁha Mahārāja (the editor of the *Patrikā*), Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja (preaching manager) [the author], Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Trivikrama Mahārāja (office-in-charge), as well as four or five *brahmacārīs*. Śrīla Guru Mahārāja preached *śuddha-bhakti* at different places in Śrī Rāmapura in the fifteen day duration of his stay there. Sometimes he lectured on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*; in large religious assemblies he spoke on the particular virtue of *sanātana-dharma*; and at other places he talked on various other subjects, such as the superiority of *vaiṣṇava-dharma*. His philosophical views, complete with *tattva* and irrefutable logic, attracted the local teachers, intellectuals, lawyers, judges, businessmen and highly educated people of all various classes. Kālīpada Gaṅgopādhyāya, the most qualified manager of the well-known Śrī Rāmapura Dharma-sabhā, was particularly helpful in facilitating the preaching.

A huge *Gītā-jayantī* program was arranged by him at the local school in Ballabhapura. Śrīla Gurudeva was the chairman of the program and gave a brilliant lecture on the teachings of *Gītā* that lasted for almost one-and-a-half hours. He said that *bhakta* Arjuna was a liberated soul, and a friend and an eternal associate of Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa was apparently instructing Arjuna when He spoke *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*, but the teachings of *Gītā* are actually for ordinary living entities, and not for Arjuna. *Gītā* is the primary teaching and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the topmost post-graduate textbook in the kingdom of *dharma*. Those who wish to enter the kingdom of *dharma* should carefully adopt these teachings.

10 Editor: No one from the Śrī *sampradāya* will ever enter a Śiva temple.

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The local Ramana Hall was the venue for a huge religious conference on the topic, 'The problems of the present age and their solutions'. The audience included eminent and highly qualified people of the town and Śrīla Ācāryadeva gave a very moving and philosophical lecture for one-and-a-half hours. He said that all problems, whether political, social or economic, will be solved when we follow *ṛṣi-nīti* (the regulations given by saints and sages). "All these problems existed in India five hundred years ago. At that time, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī was the prime minister of Hussain Shah, the ruler of Bengal. Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī's intelligence was very sharp, and when Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu transmitted His *śakti* into his heart, he was able to leave all material attachments and take shelter at Śrīman Mahāprabhu's lotus feet. He enquired from Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu about the solution to all the problems of all mankind, at all times and in all places. The answers that Śrīman Mahāprabhu gave to these questions are called *sanātana-śikṣā*. The best, natural and simple way – indeed the only way – for the educated class in Bengal to solve all their problems is to follow these teachings. *Ṛṣi-nīti* indicates the principles of the sages (*ṛṣis*) described in bona fide scriptures (*sat-śāstras*) like the Upaniṣads, *Vedānta-sūtra* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. In order to receive these teachings, it is therefore necessary to study the ancient Sanskrit scriptures. How unfortunate it is that the Ministry of Education shows so little enthusiasm for this essential aspect of education."

"... all problems, whether political, social or economic, will be solved when we follow *ṛṣi-nīti* (the regulations given by saints and sages)."

Preaching śuddha-bhakti in Caubīs Parganā and Medinīpura

On 4 January 1954, *paramārādhya* Śrīla Gurudeva visited Aśoka-nagara Colony in Howrah, at the request of the devotees there. He explained *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* for five days, giving a clear analysis of the specialty of Vaiṣṇava philosophy compared to other philosophies, especially Cārvāka philosophy[11] and the Bolshevik doctrine from Russia. Then, at the huge assembly at the local college in Mahiṣādal in Medinīpura district, lectured on the necessity of religious life. After that, at the religious assembly in front of Śrī Ananta Kumāra dāsa's temple in Nātaśāla, close to Gehūkhalī, he gave a deep lecture filled with *tattva* on the reconciliation of all different religions.

Later on, in the premises of the higher secondary English medium school of Maṅgalāmāḍo village, Śrīla Guru Mahārāja gave a lecture on Śrī Mahāprabhu's *prema-dharma*. On this topic, he said, "*Harināma-saṅkīrtana* as preached and followed by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is the only path for the *jīvas'* welfare in Kali-yuga. Certain pseudo-devotional sects (*apasampradāyas*) have sanctioned drinking alcohol and eating meat and fish. They also put forward the philosophy of *yata mata tata patha* ('whatever your opinion may be is the true way'), but these can never ever be accepted as *sanātana-dharma*. Scriptures such

11 Editor: an atheistic and hedonistic philosophy

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as the *Gītā* have clearly refuted these doctrines. The saint and the thief have different paths, and their destinations can never be the same.

"One cannot attain Śrī Bhagavān by worshipping different demigods. The supreme way of attaining Bhagavān is to worship Him by chanting His names (*śrī nāma-saṅkīrtana*). *Apasampradāya* doctrines are opposed to the scriptures and are filled with faulty conclusions. Pure Vaiṣṇavas are the *gurus* of the four *varṇas*. Unfortunately, the modern class of so-called Vaiṣṇavas is full of bad qualities and is a degraded *apasampradāya*. One cannot gain any benefit by following it. Vaiṣṇavas must perform the topmost *bhakti* to Viṣṇu and must follow the rules of proper Vaiṣṇava conduct and etiquette."

After Śrīla Gurudeva's lectures at Sarveḍiyā, Ḍhoḍā, Ekatārā, Nāīkuṇḍi, Maluvasāna, Pichladā, Golavāḍā, Maṅgalāmāḍo and other places, *tridaṇḍi-svāmī* Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Trivikrama Mahārāja and *tridaṇḍi-svāmī* Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja [the author] delivered lectures on the pastimes of Śrī Gaura, Kṛṣṇa and Rāma illustrated with slides. After preaching strongly in this way wherever he went, Śrīla Gurudeva returned to Chuṅchurā Maṭha.

Lecture at the eminent Sanskrit conference in Chuṅchurā

On 6 February 1954, prominent Sanskrit scholars of India assembled at the local Sanskrit school in Chuṅchurā for a huge Sanskrit conference. The assembly unanimously accepted *mahāmahopādhyāya* Śrī Yogendranāth (*tarka-saṅkhya, vedānta-tīrtha*) as chairman, and then the talks began. At the special request of the members of the assembly, Śrīla Gurudeva spoke for an hour on Hindu *dharma* and Vaiṣṇava philosophy. He began his lecture, which was extremely brilliant and full of deep philosophy, by especially emphasizing the need to revive Indian culture and Sanskrit education. He also stressed the necessity to organize institutions such as eminent Sanskrit conferences to develop Sanskrit education throughout India. "None of the ancient scriptures such as the Vedas, Vedānta, the Purāṇas and the Itihāsas (histories) have mentioned the word 'Hindu'," Śrīla Gurudeva pointed out. "Nevertheless, those who live between Hindukuśa or the Himālayan mountains in the North and Bindu-sarovara in the South, and who follow *sanātana-dharma* are called Hindus. Therefore, we should understand that the term 'Hindu *dharma*' refers to *sanātana-dharma*. The *vaiṣṇava-dharma* described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and other scriptures is simply *sanātana-dharma* and nothing else."

Śrīla Gurudeva then used scriptural logic and irrefutable arguments to establish that Śaṅkarācārya's *kevalādvaita-vāda*, or *māyāvāda*, is opposed to *śāstra* and is a completely imaginary and illusory doctrine. This created a commotion in the assembly, and some people stood up and started to protest. But Ācārya Kesarī displayed his expertise in all *śāstras* by wonderfully refuting their arguments and establishing the tenets of *vaiṣṇava-dharma*. The assembled Vaiṣṇavas became very joyful upon seeing his unprecedented erudition, but some *advaita-vādī* scholars became disturbed.

After Śrīla Gurudeva left, other members of the assembly gave lectures. These included *mahāmahopādhyāya* Śrī Yogendranātha (*tarka-sāṅkhya, vedānta-tīrtha*), Śrī Jīva (*nyaya-tīrtha*, MA), Dr. Mahāmānavrata Brahmacārī (MA, PhD), a teacher from Hoogly College (MA, *kāvya-tīrtha*) and many expert Sanskrit scholars from Kolkata's Sanskrit College.

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Śrī vyāsa-pūjā festival in Viṣṇupura Kamārapotā of Medinīpura

On 20 February 1954, the founder-*ācārya* and president of the Samiti visited the home of Śrī Rādhānātha dāsa Adhikārī, a resident of Kamārapotā Viṣṇupura, at his earnest request. Śrīla Ācāryadeva's appearance day, *śrī vyāsa-pūjā*, was celebrated splendidly with *pūjā-pañcaka* (the worship of five groups of venerable personalities) in accordance with *Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā-paddhati,* which was compiled by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda and revised by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. After that, Śrīla Ācāryadeva's *sannyāsī, brahmacārī* and *gṛhastha* disciples offered *puṣpāñjali* at his lotus feet.

Māghī-kṛṣṇa-pañcamī was the appearance day of Śrīla Ācāryadeva's most worshipful Śrī Gurudeva, *oṁ viṣṇupāda* Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda. On that day, Śrīla Gurudeva, together with his disciples and followers, performed *arcana-pūjana* and offered *śraddhā-puṣpāñjali* at Prabhupāda's holy feet. After various *sannyāsīs* had given their lectures at the religious assembly that day, Śrīla Ācāryadeva gave a very significant lecture on Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's transcendental character and teachings. Śrī Rādhānātha dāsa Adhikārī became the Samiti's special object of affection for taking care of all the expenses for this *vyāsa-pūjā* celebration.

Preaching sanātana-dharma in Assam

On 14 May 1954, Śrīla Ācāryadeva set out for Assam to preach *śuddha-bhakti* together with *tridaṇḍi-svāmīs* Śrī Nārasiṁha Mahārāja, Śrī Trivikrama Mahārāja, Śrī Vāmana Mahārāja, Śrī Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja [the author], Śrī Paramārthī Mahārāja, Śrī Paramdharmeśvara Brahmacārī, Śrī Ānanda Brahmacārī, Śrī Gajendra-mocana Brahmacārī and some ten to twelve residents of the *maṭha*. On 16 May they reached Goloka-gañja station. Śrī Sanata Kumāra Bhakti-śāstrī Bhāgavat-bhūṣaṇa and other leading devotees then brought them with *nagara-saṅkīrtana* to Śrī Divyajñāna dāsa Adhikārī's home, where Śrīla Gurudeva's *pūjā-arcana* was performed. For several days, at large religious assemblies, Śrīla Gurudeva spoke on *śuddha-bhakti* and the glories of *śrī harināma*. After that, he went with his party to Dhūvaḍī. There he stayed at the Prapannāśrama of his godbrother, Śrīpāda Nimānanda Sevā-tīrtha Prabhu, and lectured continuously for seven days on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. He used logic and śāstric evidence to establish that Vedānta philosophy (*vedānta-darśana*) stands supreme amongst the six philosophical systems [associated with the Vedic scriptures][12] and that *bhakti* is the ultimate subject matter of *Vedānta-sūtra*.

After this, Śrīla Gurudeva preached *bhakti* in Kacaharīhāṭa, Khākasiyālī and other places, and then accepted the hospitality of Śrī Prakṛtiśacandra Baruā Bahādura, the prince of the Gaurīpura kingdom. Śrīla Guru Mahārāja stayed there for some days and extensively preached *sanātana-dharma*. Every day he lectured on the Eleventh Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* at the Sanskrit school run by the local king. The principal of the school came there regularly to hear *Bhāgavatam*,

12 Editor: There are six systems of philosophy (*ṣaḍ-darśana*) associated with the Vedic scriptures: *nyāya* (logic), *vaiśeṣika* (atomic theory), *sāṅkhya* (analysis of matter and spirit), *yoga* (the discipline of self-realization), *karma-mīmāṁsā* (the science of fruitive work) and Vedānta (the science of God realization).

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along with other teachers and many students. The minister Bahādura of Gaurīpura state and many officials came as well. After that Śrīla Gurudeva preached in Kumārī village and other places and arrived at the famous village Cāpara. There, on the excellent premises of the local higher secondary English medium school, an extensive religious assembly was organized with an audience of some ten to twelve thousand people. Śrīla Guru Mahārāja gave a deep and probing lecture on *sanātana-dharma*, which very much impressed the educated, respected and faithful listeners.

In those days, a so-called *guru* called Kṣetra-mohana Cakravartī was living in Cāpara. Posing as a Vaiṣṇava, he preached many doctrines that were opposed to *vaiṣṇava-dharma*, and his moral character was also not very pure. The locals invited him and his followers to a debate with Ācārya Kesarī. Śrīla Gurudeva asked him some questions regarding *śuddha-bhakti*, but Cakravartī could not answer them. Śrīla Gurudeva proved in front of the audience that Cakravartī's doctrines were against *śāstra* and were not in accordance with any *sampradāya*. Cakravartī became ashamed. Begging for forgiveness at Śrīla Gurujī's lotus feet, he left the assembly.

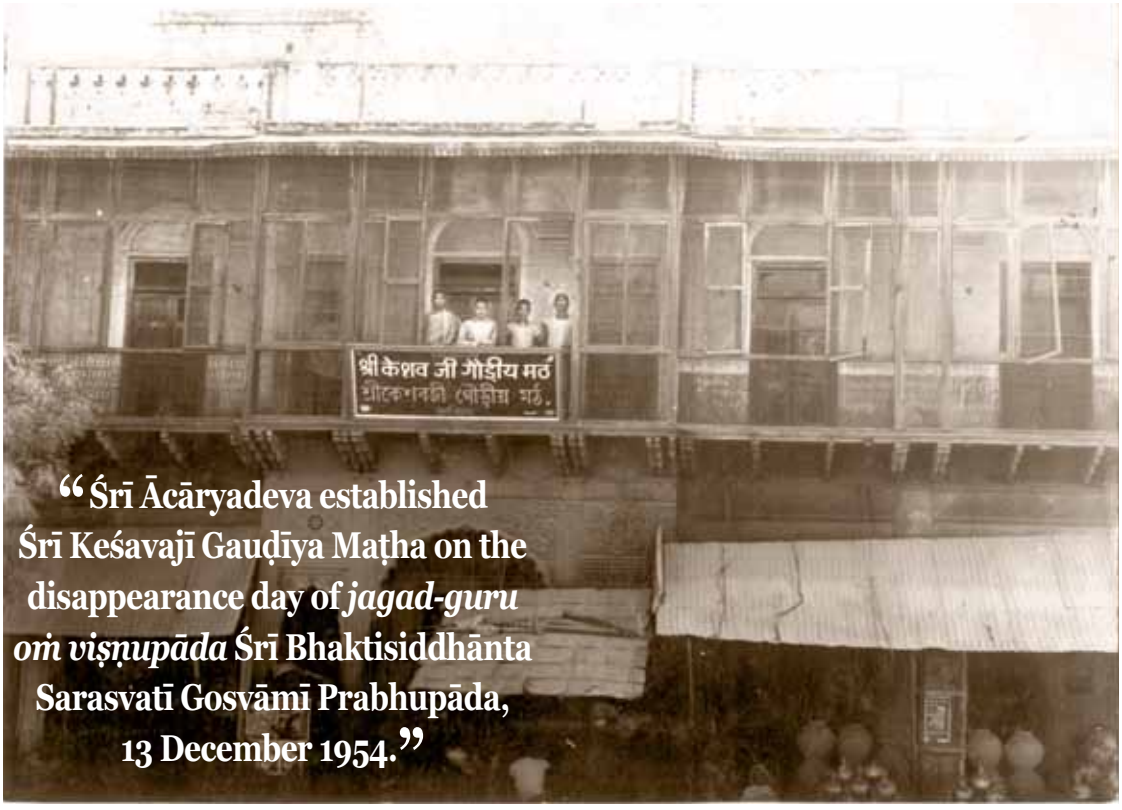
After this, at the request of the honourable minister Bahādura of the Abhayāpurī state, Śrīla Gurudeva and his preaching party visited Abhyāpurī. They stayed there for three days and Śrīla Gurudeva gave very impressive lectures on *sanātana-dharma* on the premises of the local girls' school. Mahārāja Bahādura of Abhayāpurī was very impressed by his lectures and with great faith offered prayers at Śrīla Ācāryadeva's lotus feet. Mahārāja Bahādura's meek and humble behaviour, his unpretentious way of life, his truthfulness, generosity, and his sincere faith in religion and in the Lord are all very praiseworthy. After preaching in Cokāpāḍā and Boṅgāī village, Śrīla Gurudeva returned to Uddhāraṇa Gauḍīya Maṭha in Chuṅchurā.

Establishing Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha in Mathurā and publishing Śrī Bhāgavata-patrikā

The eighty-four *kosa* Vraja-maṇḍala *parikramā* in 1954 took place with great festivities in the month of Kārtika under the guidance of Śrīla Guru Mahārāja. After the pilgrims left, Śrīla Gurudeva along with Śrīpāda Sanātana dāsa Adhikārī[13], Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja [the author] and other disciples, stayed in Mathurā for some days. Śrīla Gurudeva wanted to establish a preaching centre of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti in Śrī Mathurā-dhāma and from there spread Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's pure *bhakti* to the whole of North India. Śrīla Gurudeva was a perfect *niṣkiñcana* Vaiṣṇava with no financial means whatsoever. Nonetheless, for seven days he and his followers kept searching for a suitable place. On the seventh day they saw an old *dharmaśālā* on the south side of the famous Kaṁsa-ṭīlā and in front of the big hospital in Mathurā. It was a dilapidated building but the location was excellent – central to Holi Gate, the Imperial Bank, the State Bank of India, the Head Post Office, the State bus stand and the main market. It was a solid building made of bricks and stone, and it had thirty-six rooms. The party discussed the price with the owner of the *dharmaśālā*, but Gurujī did not have even one

13 Editor: see Appendix page 401

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श्री केशव जी गौड़ीय मठ
श्रीकेशवजी गौड़ीया मठ.
"Śrī Ācāryadeva established Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha on the disappearance day of *jagad-guru oṁ viṣṇupāda* Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda, 13 December 1954."

Old Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha, 1954

paisā, so what could be done? Gurujī returned to his residence with his party.

The next day, Śrīla Gurudeva was ready to see another place, but Śrī Sanātana Prabhu declared, "Today I am very tired. I like the place we saw yesterday. I don't want to see anything else." Gurujī said, "It is not possible to collect forty to fifty thousand rupees at once. At least we would have to put down some money as an advance payment and I don't even have enough for that." Śrī Sanātana Prabhu then took seven thousand rupees from the belt around his waist and gave the money to Śrī Gurudeva. Everyone stared at Sanātana Prabhu's face in amazement, their eyes open wide. "I have known your desire for a long time," Śrī Sanātana Prabhu told Gurujī. "That is why I have been roaming about with this money around my waist for a month or a month-and-a-half. Now I do not want to see anything else. Please arrange to buy the *dharmaśālā* we saw yesterday." Gurujī said, "We need at least twelve thousand rupees as an advance payment to get the written agreement on this place." On hearing this, Śrī Sanātana Prabhu sent a telegram to his son Śrī Nārāyaṇa dāsa, to quickly send the rest of the money. The deed was registered in the Mathurā Registration Office.

Śrī Ācāryadeva established Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha on the disappearance day of *jagad-guru oṁ viṣṇupāda* Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda, 13 December 1954. In accordance with Śrīla Ācāryadeva's desire, preaching of pure *bhakti-dharma*

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Present Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha, 2013

throughout the whole of North India started from there. Besides this, also according to his desire, the publication of *Śrī Bhāgavata-patrikā*, the Samiti's transcendental monthly Hindi magazine, was inaugurated there. Śrīla Gurudeva appointed me [the author] as the editor of this magazine. It quickly became very popular in the local educated community, because of its sentiments, language and its philosophy, which was full of *siddhānta*. *Śrī Bhāgavata-patrikā* introduced eminent Mathurā scholars to the supremacy of the philosophical views of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas' *bhakti-dharma*, and they lavishly glorified it.

In 1955, *kārtika-vrata niyama-sevā* was organized at Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha under the guidance of *paramārādhyatama* Śrīla Gurudeva. Under the auspices of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti, the pilgrimage began from Howrah station on the auspicious day 29 October. The *parikramā* party reached Mathurā via Kāśī and Prayāga, and arrived at Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha on 2 November. From there they started Vraja-maṇḍala *parikramā*. Śrīmad Bhakti Bhūdeva Śrautī Mahārāja, Śrīmad Bhakti Vijñāna Āśrama Mahārāja, Śrīmad Bhakti Jīvana Janārdana Mahārāja, Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Trivikrama Mahārāja and Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja [the author] glorified the *dhāma*, performed *kīrtana* and spoke *hari-kathā*. Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja (editor of *Śrī Bhāgavat-patrikā*), Rasarāja Vrajavāsī (publisher and manager of the *Patrikā*), Śrī Sudāma Sakhā Brahmacārī and Śrī Prabuddha

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First issue of *Śrī Bhāgavata-patrikā*

Kṛṣṇa Brahmacārī were especially active in arranging suitable transportation, lodging and so on for the pilgrims.

At the time of *govardhana-pūjā*, the *annakūṭa* festival was completed with great celebration. The large assembly hall (*nāṭya-mandira*) was filled with preparations for offering. The Mathurāvāsīs had never before seen such a big *annakūṭa* festival. Ordinarily in Vraja, *chappan bhoga* (an offering of fifty-six preparations) is outstanding, but Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti offered three hundred and sixty-five different preparations at this huge *annakūṭa*. All around Śrī Girirāja Mahārāja were pyramids of rice as well as large and small plates of *khicrī*, sweet rice, different kinds of sweets, vegetables, pickles, chutneys, *halvah*, *laḍḍūs*, *pūrīs*, fruits, roots, green leafy vegetables, etc., all with *tulasī-mañjarīs* on top. Faithful people came from great distances to have *darśana*, and about five thousand people accepted *mahā-prasāda*. When *kārtika-vrata* was completed, all the pilgrims returned to their respective places.

Installation of the deities and annakūṭa festival in Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha, Mathurā

On 3 November 1956, the day of *śrī govardhana-pūjā* and *annakūṭa*, *paramārādhya* Śrīla Ācāryadeva established his worshipful Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga and Rādhā-Vinoda-bihārījī in Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha. In this way he gave his followers and the Vrajavāsīs a golden opportunity to serve the deities. The deities' *darśana* is very sweet and attractive. Those who see Them feel in their hearts that the deities have been attracted by the unparalleled *prema* of *aśraya-vigraha* (*śrīla gurudeva*) and have manifested Their own *prema-maya vigraha* (Their form imbued with *prema*).

There was a great celebration when the deities were installed. *Pūjyapāda* Śrī Bhakti Bhūdeva Śrauti Mahārāja performed the *abhiṣeka*, *arcana* and other aspects of the installation, along with Śrī Trivikrama Mahārāja and Rasarāja Vrajavāsī. Śrīmad Bhakti Kuśala Nārasiṁha Mahārāja, Śrīmad Bhakti Deśika Ācārya Mahārāja, Śrī Paramārthī Mahārāja, Śrī Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja [the author] and other prominent *sannyāsīs* performed *vaiṣṇava-homa* and other ceremonies. After the *abhiṣeka*, the deities were installed in the altar room, and there Śrī Ācāryadeva himself consecrated Them. He quoted a verse that he

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The deities in Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha – Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Vinoda-bihārījī

had personally composed, to explain the *tattva-siddhānta* regarding the white complexion of the deity Śrī Vinoda-bihārījī:

rādhā-cintā-niveśena
yasya kāntir vilopitā
śrī-kṛṣṇa-caraṇaṁ vande
rādhālińgita-vigraham

I worship that Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is tightly embraced by Śrīmatī Rādhikā. His dark complexion has disappeared and He has become resplendent with a golden complexion, due to being thoroughly immersed in separation from Her.

Śrī Mohinī-mohan Rāgabhūṣaṇa Prabhu and Śrī Satya-vigraha Prabhu charmed the listeners



Śrī govardhana-pūjā and *annakūṭa*

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with their *śrī nāma-kīrtana* at this ceremony. In the *nāṭya-mandira* in front of the altar, Śrī Girirājajī was offered a mountain of *laḍḍūs*, *pūrīs*, *kacauris*, rice, sweet rice, *puṣpānna*, *khicrī*, different kinds of vegetables, fruits, roots, curd, milk, *paneer* and other preparations. Many people participated in this ceremony, including professors from various colleges in Mathurā-dhāma, school teachers, lawyers, judges and other educated and respected gentlemen. They were all very impressed to hear from Śrīla Ācāryadeva about *bhakti-tattva* in the Gauḍīya tradition. And after that, they became very blissful to have *darśana* of the deities and honour delicious *mahā-prasāda*, which was distributed to almost three thousand people that day.

Giriścandra dāsa from Pūrvacaka in Medinīpura district bore all the expenses for the *annakūṭa*. Gajendra-mohan dāsa Adhikārī and Śrīyukta Kamalabālā-devī from Kalyaṇapura donated the deities, Their clothes, ornaments and so on. Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti greatly appreciated their ideal service.

Preaching the message of Śrī Caitanya in Assam

In December 1955, *paramārādhyatama* Śrī Gurudeva, accompanied by his initiated *sannyāsīs* and *brahmacārīs*, extensively preached Śrī Caitanya's message in various places in Assam. This time he went to most of the places in *pūjyapāda* Śrī Nimānanda Sevā-tīrtha Prabhu's preaching area. Śrīla Gurudeva spoke on *sanātana-dharma*, *bhāgavata-dharma*, *śuddha-bhakti* and other subjects in prominent religious assemblies in Goloka-gañja, Dhūbaḍī, Bichandaī, Khānurī, Rāmapura, Bongāī Grāma, Chakāpāḍā, Khagarpura, Sākomūḍā, Calantāpaḍā, Abhayapurī and other places. He returned to Chuṅchurā Maṭha after about one month of preaching.

Śrī vyāsa-pūjā festival in Begunābāḍī

Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti has for many years observed *śrī vyāsa-pūjā* according to the *Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā-paddhati* compiled by Śrīla Sarasvatī Prabhupāda and revised by Śrī Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. The original inception of *śrī vyāsa-pūjā* took place in Śrīvāsa-āṅgana in Śrī Dhāma Māyāpura about five hundred years ago. Under the guidance of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu worshipped Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu on the seat of Śrī Vyāsa. On this occasion, Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita brought up the topic of a *śrī vyāsa-pūjā-paddhati* to Śrīman Mahāprabhu. For this reason, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura took great pains to collect this ancient *paddhati* from [Śrī Śaṅkarācārya's] Govardhana Maṭha in Purī. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura then revised and developed it to make it suitable for his *sampradāya*. *Paramārādhyatama* Śrīla Gurudeva found this *paddhati* and introduced the observance of *śrī vyāsa-pūjā* combined with *pūjā-pañcaka*. This ceremony is observed in various places every year, with great celebration.

This year *śrī vyāsa-pūjā* was organized in the vast courtyard of the school at Begunābāḍī in Medinīpura district, and was celebrated in a grand way for three days, from Māghī-kṛṣṇa-tṛtīyā to Pañcamī. Ten or twelve thousand people participated every day in this festival, and on the last day, *mahā-prasāda* was distributed to a crowd too large to count. Girīścandra dāsa Adhikārī from Pūrvacaka received special praise from the Samiti for shouldering the entire expenses for the festival.

Śrī Girīścandrajī and his wife both received *hari-nāma mantra* and *dīkṣā* from Śrī Ācāryadeva

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on the first day of the festival. At that time he was eighty-four years old. As a wealthy landowner, he had previously spent his life in a grandiose way with pomp and show. He would order fragrant tobacco from France and other foreign countries, and used to sit on his bed smoking his golden *hukka* through a long pipe. But during the last eighty-four *kosa* Vraja-maṇḍala *parikramā*, he had spent one month hearing pure *hari-kathā* and his heart changed. Now he was free from worldly attachments and had taken a vow to perform *bhajana*. Before shaving his head on the day of *dīkṣā*, he did a last *praṇāma* to his dear-most *hukka* and threw it away. Everyone was amazed to see his conviction and determination.

On the first day of *śrī vyāsa-pūjā* our most worshipful Śrīla Gurudeva offered *arcana-pūjan* and *puṣpāñjali* at the lotus feet of his *paramārādhyatama* Śrīla Prabhupāda, after which Śrīla Ācāryadeva's *sannyāsī*, *brahmacārī* and *gṛhastha* disciples offered *puṣpāñjali* at his lotus feet. Śrī Trivikrama Mahārāja gave a lecture about *śrī guru-pūjā* and our most worshipful Śrī Gurudeva spoke about *śrī vyāsa-pūjā*. At the religious assembly in the evening, Śrīla Guru Mahārāja read the section in *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata* about *vyāsa-pūjā*. On the second day, letters of commemoration in various languages were read and Śrī Ācāryadeva gave a lecture. On the third day, Śrīla Ācāryadeva instructed Śrī Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja [the author] and Śrī Rasarāja Vrajavāsī to perform *śrī vyāsa-pūjā* according to the *Vyāsa-pūjā-paddhati* with *pūjā-pañcaka* of sixteen articles.

A protest against the law controlling Hindu sādhus and sannyāsīs

Since ancient times, India has predominantly been a religious country. All aspects of Indian culture – such as tradition, morality, social structure, politics and administration – have been determined and conducted from a religious perspective since Vedic times. The supremacy of *dharma* in the Indian society was protected even during the rule of the Muslims and the British. However, after India attained independence, *dharma* has declined very rapidly, to an extent that has not been seen for thousands of years.

On 27 July 1956, a proposal to control Hindu *sādhus* and *sannyāsīs* was brought to the Loka-sabhā[14] of the Indian parliament. The rationale behind this legislation was that the behaviour of *sādhus* and *sannyāsīs* was becoming more sinful, and that their lifestyle was becoming increasingly contrary to the interests of society at large. Furthermore, there was an increase in incidences of begging. It was thought necessary to control this, and the intention was to use legislation to protect the reputation of true *sādhus* and purify society.

At that time, *paramārādhyatama* Ācārya Kesarī was residing in Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha in Mathurā. When he was informed about this legislation, he protested with a lion-like voice. "The Indian Penal Code has ample regulations to suppress sinful behaviour and activities opposed to society," he said. "What is the need for this separate law? And why not pass a law on Muslim mullahs, Christian popes and ministers, Buddhist mendicants and Jain mendicants? Why cause an uproar about Hindus and no one else? Before any legislation against Hindu *sādhus* is presented in the Loka-sabhā, it should be publicized throughout the whole country. Only then should the debate be conducted in the Loka-sabhā. It is

14 Editor: the lower house of the Indian parliament

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improper in all respects to neglect this procedure and make some law secretly."

Ācārya Kesarī started a forceful campaign, protesting strongly against this legislation. He wrote a letter of protest, printed it in Hindi, Bengali and English, and sent it to prominent politicians, social leaders and leaders of religious societies. A copy of the letter was sent to Śrī Nehrujī, who was the prime minister at the time, and also to the members of the Loka-sabhā. The result was that the people became so awake to the situation that the Loka-sabhā quickly rejected the legislation. The following is a copy of the protest he wrote.

"The laws, rules and regulations of India are all defined according to śāstric law; no legislation can be accepted in India which is separate from śāstric law. No person or society can control *sādhus* and *sannyāsīs*; they are only controlled by *śāstra*. We find evidence to support this statement in all the Purāṇas and other *śāstras*. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (4.21.12) it is said:

sarvatrāskhalitādeśaḥ
sapta-dvīpaika-daṇḍa-dhṛk
anyatra brāhmaṇa-kulād
anyatrācyuta-gotrataḥ

Mahārāja Pṛthu, who was the sole emperor of the entire world, very firmly applied his system of law and punishment to everyone except for *ṛṣis*, *brāhmaṇas* and *acyuta-gotrīya viṣṇu-bhaktas* (Vaiṣṇavas).

"Saints are India's pride and charming beauty. People from all over the world are attracted to this beautiful ornament of India and are ready to construct their own spiritual and social lives in accordance with them. Indian *sādhus* and *sannyāsīs* are very peace-loving. That is why the whole world looks to India for peace. It is extremely improper and completely illegal to check religious conduct by politics.

"It was declared in the Indian constitution that India is primarily a secular state. This attempt by the Indian Loka-sabhā to try to restrict one religion and not others is therefore completely against the constitutional law. If this legislation were passed, the Penal Code, Criminal Procedure Code and other laws would also have to be changed and revised in many fields.

"There is no need to make a new law to control misbehaviour separately. If it is necessary to prepare a separate law to control the misconduct of so-called *sādhus*, then it is also necessary to prepare a separate law to control the misconduct, sinful behaviour and anti-social activities of the Congress party and other political parties. It is more essential to control the political agents than it is to control the *ācāryas*, the most prominent, of the *sādhus* and *sannyāsīs*. Another point is that so far there are no laws prepared to control the black market and other anomalies in society.

"Only *sādhus* and *sannyāsīs* can understand the activities of other *sādhus* and *sannyāsīs*. How can anyone recognize a *sādhu* if he is not a *sādhu* himself, and has never had the association of *sādhus* and *sannyāsīs*, or even been near them? How can he judge who is a *sādhu* and who is not? We need laws which apply to everyone. At present there is no arrangement to control non-*sādhus*, yet non-*sādhus* are tightening their waist-belts and jumping to their feet to control *sādhus*. This is the age of voting, and there are more non-*sādhus* than *sādhus*; that is why they can present laws to condone atrocities against *sādhus*. The majority is creating an atrocity against the minority. We can never call this a good rule.

"Nowadays *sādhus* are the object of malice and violence. Non-*sādhus* are becoming degraded

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and ashamed because of their misconduct in society. They feel abandoned and disrespected by *sādhus*, and in revenge are presenting bills to control them. This is befitting the age of Kali. The proposal to register *sādhus* will give all the non-*sādhus* of India a golden opportunity; they will be able to validate their immoral character by entering their names in the register of *sādhus*. Actual *sādhus* do not want to be called *sādhu* and would feel ashamed to be identified as a registered or licensed *sādhu*. Some *sādhus* will not even register their names at the government office. Besides, if the licensing officer is anti-Hindu, how can one rely on him to judge who is and who is not a *sādhu* according to Hindu scripture?

"Here is another point. Is a householder (*gṛhastha*) considered a *sādhu* or not, according to the proposed definition? If they are excluded from the *sādhu* category then householders who are actually very elevated will be called non-*sādhus*. This will be an offence under Section 352 of Indian Penal Code, or else a case of defamation under Section 500 of the same. If some *gṛhastha* wants to adopt a virtuous way of life or to become a *sādhu*, then he will also have to take a license or get his name registered. Suppose a highly posted official in an office or a law court wants to lead a religious life. Must he certify his goodness with some district magistrate who may be immoral or even vicious? And will that district magistrate have the power to cancel the licence and punish that virtuous official?

"The constitution of India has passed the 'Widow Marriage Act' and the 'Śārada Child Marriage Act' proposed by the honourable Īśvara-candra Vidyāsāgara, but the Indian public has not accepted them. These laws are lying in some corner of the library of the Indian constitution. This present law will certainly face the same sorry plight if it is forced on the general public against their wishes. We are totally against such a law. We humbly request the members of the Loka-sabhā to reject this bill. We also request all Indian newspapers and their readers to oppose this blind law with all their power. Indeed, we request the entire society, especially the *sādhus* and *sannyāsīs* of India, to unite and raise their voices against this law."

Inauguration of Śrī Goloka-gañja Gauḍīya Maṭha (Assam)

Jagad-guru Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Ṭhākura preached *śuddha-bhakti* strongly outside West Bengal, in Assam, Bihar, Orissa, Chennai (Madras), Uttara Pradesh and elsewhere. There were many *gṛhastha* devotees in these different states who were very expert in the philosophical conclusions of *śuddha-bhakti* and who preached in their own local languages. One of the foremost of these was Śrīpāda Nimānanda Sevā-tīrtha Prabhu from Dhūbaḍī in Assam, who preached Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's message in Assamese all over Assam, under Śrīla Prabhupāda's guidance. But very shortly after Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda entered *aprakaṭa-līlā*, Śrīpāda Sevā-tīrtha Prabhu also left this world. Before he left, he instructed his disciples to continue their spiritual life under the guidance of the most worshipful Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja.

Śrīpāda Sevā-tīrtha Prabhu had one very outstanding *gṛhastha* disciple, Śrīmatī Sucitrābālā-devī, who was greatly intelligent and able to understand the subtle concepts of *bhakti-dharma*. In the scriptures (*Raghuvaṁśa* 14.46)

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it is stated, "*ājñā gurūṇāṁ hy avicāraṇīyā* – the *guru's* orders should be followed without consideration." Sucitrā-devī, therefore, was most insistent in her invitation to *ācārya* Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja to come to Assam to preach *śuddha-bhakti*. On her repeated requests, Śrīla Gurudeva arrived in Goloka-gañja with twelve followers, and preached *bhakti* strongly in various places. The public was very impressed to see the special quality of Śrīla Guru Mahārāja's preaching and to hear the hidden *siddhāntas* of *bhakti*, and they resolved to take up spiritual life and follow his teachings.

The devoted Sucitrā-devī unconditionally donated her land and newly built residence for the purpose of establishing a Gauḍīya Maṭha in Goloka-gañja. This donation was duly registered at the Registration Office in the main town of Gvālapāḍā district, Dhūbaḍī. Her husband, Śrīyuta Devendracandra dāsa (initiated as Śrī Divya-jñāna dāsa Adhikārī), stood by his wife's side in this transcendental task.

At Śrī Surendranātha dāsa's request, Śrīla Gurudeva came with his preaching party to Devān village in Gvālapāḍā district on 11–12 February 1957. An extensive festival took place here for Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu's appearance day and for Śrī Nimānanda Sevā-tīrtha Prabhu's disappearance day. At the local religious assembly, Śrīla Ācāryadeva gave a brilliant lecture on the life history of Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu and Śrī Nimānanda Prabhu. *Tridaṇḍī-svāmī* Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja [the author] explained *gaura-līlā* with the aid of a slide-show. *Paṇḍita* Śrī Sanat Kumāra dāsa Adhikārī and *paṇḍita* Śrī Vṛndāvana dāsa Adhikārī also delivered lectures displaying a brilliant command of language. Honourable Śrī Suren dāsa met all the expenses for the festival.

Śrī vyāsa-pūjā celebration in Śrī Goloka-gañja Gauḍīya Maṭha

On 17–19 February 1957, there was a great celebration of *śrī vyāsa-pūjā* at Śrī Goloka-gañja Gauḍīya Maṭha for three days, while Śrīla Ācāryadeva was present there with his disciples. *Śrī vyāsa-pūjā* was carried out under his guidance with *pūjā-pañcaka* according to Śrīla Sarasvatī Prabhupāda's *paddhati*. An extensive religious assembly was held in the courtyard of the *maṭha*, and Śrīla Gurupāda-padma submitted an analytical and philosophical lecture on following Śrī Vyāsadeva and *śrī vyāsa-pūjā*. Afterwards, *mahā-prasāda* was distributed to two to three thousand guests, both invited and uninvited. Śrīmatī Sucitrābālā-devī and her family aided greatly in facilitating the festival, as did Śrī Sudāma Sakhā Brahmacārī and Dhanyātidhanya Brahmacārī, who worked tirelessly.

Śrī Ācārya Kesarī at the 'All-Bengal Vaiṣṇava Conference'

Śrīpāṭa Maheśa is a well-known place adjacent to Śrī Rāmapura in Hoogly district in Bengal. The *ratha-yātrā* that is held there is like the one in Jagannātha Purī. Previously, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's associate Śrī Kamalākara Pippallāī stayed there and performed *sādhana-bhajana*. On the occasion of the anniversary of his disappearance day an 'All-Bengal Vaiṣṇava Conference' was organized for three days, 12–14 March 1957, under the auspices of the Sinthi Vaiṣṇava Society and the Śrī Rāmapura Dharma-sabhā. Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti's founder-*ācārya*,

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Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī, was selected as the chairman of this conference. Śrī Gopendrabhūṣaṇa (*sāṅkhya-tīrtha*), *paṇḍita* Surendranātha (*pañca-tīrtha*), Śrī Nagendranātha Śāstrī (teacher), *paṇḍita* Śrī Phaṇīndranātha Śāstrī (MABL) and other famous scholars of Navadvīpa were all present there.

Śrī Vinoda-Kiśora Gosvāmī (*purāṇa-tīrtha*) addressed the assembly. The main guest, advocate Śrī Patita-pāvana Caṭṭopādhyāya, gave a speech on Śrī Kamalākara Pippallāī's life history, and the scholars mentioned earlier also spoke. *Tridaṇḍi-svāmī* Śrīpāda Bhaktivedānta Trivikrama Mahārāja made some critical comments about Śrī Phaṇīndranātha Śāstrī's statements. After that, the chairman, Śrīla Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, gave a lecture with many references from *śāstra* on Śrī Kamalākara Pippallāī. In a serious voice, he strongly opposed to views contrary to *śāstra* that *prākṛta-sahajiyās* had written in unauthentic literature. *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* mentions Śrī Pippallāījī, whose life was actually full of pure *bhakti*. However, the recorded life history about him includes some impure and *avaiṣṇava* views, which are actually against *bhakti*. At the end of the assembly, the audience brought up many questions regarding Śrī Pippallāī, which Śrīla Gurudeva resolved.

Observing fasting (upavāsa) on Śrī Rādhāṣṭamī

Śrī Rādhāṣṭamī has a special significance in the society of Śrī Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, and they honour this day very deeply. Śrīmatī Rādhikā is Kṛṣṇa's most complete *śakti*. She is Herself Īśvarī and all other *śaktis* manifest from Her. For this reason, some people want to regard Rādhāṣṭamī as a *jayantī* and observe fasting without water, as they do on Kṛṣṇa-janmāṣṭamī. In reality, though, even though *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* refers to the Śrī Rādhāṣṭamī *tithi* as a *vrata*, it does not prescribe any fasting for this day. Thus the *sahajiyā sampradāya*, which observes fasting on this day, is actually exhibiting excessive devotion (*ati-bhakti*) towards Śrī Rādhārāṇī. *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* is the only Smṛti for the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, and it records in a splendid way, with scriptural references, the system by which Vaiṣṇavas should observe *vratas* and fasting. *Sat-kriya-sāra-dīpikā* is another prominent text concerning activities prescribed by *śāstra*. It is improper for a pure Vaiṣṇava to create new *vratas* and transgress *vratas* and other rules recorded in these books. Nowadays the Gauḍīya Mission, which is supported by Congress Company, has changed the pure Vaiṣṇava line and has begun to observe Śrī Rādhāṣṭamī *vrata* according to the doctrine of the *sahajiyās*.

Observance of *vrata* and fasting is prescribed in the *śāstras* only for the appearance days of *śaktimān para-tattva* (the Supreme Truth who possesses all potencies) or His incarnations. If fasting were observed for the appearance of *śakti-tattva*, then one would have to observe fasting on all 365 days of the year. This is because, in addition to *bhagavat-śaktis*, all the *ācāryas* and *gurus* in the *guru-paramparā* are included in *śakti-tattva*, and it is impossible to observe a *vrata* and fasting on all of the appearance and disappearance days.

All the *maṭhas* under the jurisdiction of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti observed Śrī Rādhāṣṭamī *vrata* on Sunday, 1 September 1957, as prescribed by Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī. On this day there was *abhiṣeka* of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, with special offerings of *bhoga*, lectures on *śrī rādhā-tattva*, *saṅkīrtana* and so on.

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On Rādhāṣṭamī day, Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja visited Śrī Caitanya Sārasvata Maṭha, which *parama-pūjyapāda* Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣaka Śrīdhara Gosvāmī Mahārāja had established in Koleragañja, Navadvīpa. There, the *ācārya* of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti gave a deeply philosophical lecture on *rādhā-tattva*. Other speakers also offered *puṣpāñjali* at the lotus feet of Śrīmatī Rādhikā by revealing their own understanding.

Vyāsa-pūjā at Śrī Gauravāṇī-Vinoda Āśrama in Khaḍagpura

On 8 February 1958, *śrī vyāsa-pūjā* was celebrated in a grand way on *jagad-guru* Śrīla Prabhupāda's appearance day at Śrī Gauravāṇī-Vinoda Āśrama in Khaḍagpura. This was made possible by the irrepressible enthusiasm of *tridaṇḍi-svāmī* Śrīmad Bhakti Jīvana Janārdana Mahārāja, the president of the *āśrama*. In the previous year, *vyāsa-pūjā* had been celebrated with great festivity in Śrī Golokagañja Gauḍīya Maṭha in Assam, according to the method initiated by Śrīla Sarasvatī Prabhupāda. In 1956, the celebrations had been held in Begunabāḍī, Pūrvacaka, near Medinīpura.

Oṁ viṣṇupāda Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Mahārāja attended this *vyāsa-pūjā* with his disciples and officiated at the ceremony. On the second day of the festival, *mahā-prasāda* was distributed to about five thousand faithful people. A *dharma-sabhā* was arranged, and Śrīla Ācāryadeva addressed the assembly as follows: "Not only we Indians but the whole world is eternally indebted to Śrī Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa. He divided the Vedas into four parts to help general people who are trying to study them. He compiled *Vedānta-sūtra*, or *Brahma-sūtra*, in order to reconcile apparent contradictions between Vedānta and Upaniṣads, the essence of the Vedas. He composed the different Purāṇas and the *Mahābhārata* and finally, in order to make *Vedānta-sūtra* easily understandable, he manifested the spotless *mahā-purāṇa*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, as the commentary on *Vedānta-sūtra*.

"All the religious societies in India believe somehow or other that they are followers of Vyāsa. However, when we carefully study the literature composed by Śrī Vyāsadeva, we can clearly see that *bhagavad-bhakti* is the main subject matter in his literature. He has not mentioned the words *jñāna* or *mukti* anywhere in the five hundred and fifty aphorisms of his famous *Brahma-sūtra*. On the contrary, he has established *bhakti* everywhere in the genuine commentary on his *Brahma-sūtra*, namely, *pāramahaṁsī saṁhitā Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

"Although the Śrī Śaṅkara *sampradāya* gives prominence to *vyāsa-pūjā*, their so-called *vyāsa-pūjā* is a mockery. In Ācārya Śaṅkara's commentary on *Brahma-sūtra*, he has accused Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Śrī Vedavyāsa of being mistaken. Śrī Śaṅkara has written that *brahma* is the embodiment of bliss (*ānanda-svarūpa*), and can never be blissful (*ānanda-maya*). But Śrī Vyāsajī has called *brahma ānanda-maya* in *Vedānta-sūtra*. In this way, Ācārya Śaṅkara has attempted to refute Śrīla Vyāsadeva's opinion. Therefore, Ācārya Śaṅkara's *vyāsa-pūjā* is only for show.

"Śrī Vyāsadeva is worshipped properly in the Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya*. All *tridaṇḍī-sannyāsīs* should accept the example of the *vyāsa-pūjā* celebrated by Śrīpāda Janārdana Mahārāja. Nowadays, we see that, in the name of *vyāsa-pūjā*, so-called *gurus* everywhere accept *puṣpāñjali* and *arcāñjali* offered to their own feet and they hear and accept praise given to them by their

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"On *vyāsa-pūjā* day, an *ācārya* will worship *guru, guru-paramparā* and *upāsya*. ... It is the supreme duty of Śrī Gauḍīya Sārasvata Vaiṣṇavas to follow the *Vyāsa-pūjā-paddhati* used by Śrīla Prabhupāda."

own disciples. However, those who only accept *puṣpāñjali* and *arcāñjali* offered to their own feet and do not follow *Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā-paddhati* (which was collected by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda and edited and developed by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura) are not actually performing *vyāsa-pūjā*. On *vyāsa-pūjā* day, an *ācārya* will worship *guru, guru-paramparā* and *upāsya* (the object of worship). According to this *pūjā-paddhati*, on that day one should worship *guru-pañcaka, ācārya-pañcaka, vyāsa-pañcaka, sanakādi-pañcaka, kṛṣṇa-pañcaka, upāsya-pañcaka* and *pañca-tattva-pañcaka*.[15] It is the supreme duty of Śrī Gauḍīya Sārasvata Vaiṣṇavas to follow the *Vyāsa-pūjā-paddhati* used by Śrīla Prabhupāda."

On this occasion, when the disciples of Śrīpāda Janārdana Mahārāja went to him to offer *puṣpāñjali* at his feet, he instructed them to offer *puṣpāñjali* first at the feet of their *śikṣā-guru*, Śrīla Keśava Mahārāja. When, on their *guru's* order, all the disciples came to Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja to offer *puṣpāñjali*, he in turn explained that a disciple should first worship his own *guru's* feet and then other *gurus*. For this he gave examples and proofs from *śāstra*. Śrīpāda Janārdana Mahārāja could not reject the instruction from his senior godbrother and *śikṣā-guru*. Accordingly, his disciples worshipped their own *gurudeva* and then offered *puṣpāñjali* to Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja. *Pūjyapāda* Janārdana Mahārāja did not forget this event for his whole life. He used to say that he had watched all his godbrothers very closely, but had never seen anyone who was so generous, so learned in *siddhānta*, and such a fearless speaker of truth as Śrīla Keśava Mahārāja. When he spoke like this, tears would come to his eyes.



Pūjyapāda Bhakti Jīvana Janārdana Mahārāja

15 (1) *guru-pañcaka*: *śrī guru, parama-guru, parameṣṭhī-guru, parātpara-guru* and *parama-parātpara-guru*;
(2) *ācārya-pañcaka*: Śrī Śukadeva, Rāmānuja, Madhva, Viṣṇusvāmī and Nimbāditya;
(3) *vyāsa-pañcaka*: Śrī Vedavyāsa, Paila, Vaiśamapāyana, Jaiminī and Sumanta;
(4) *sanakādi-pañcaka*: Śrī Sanaka, Sanat-kumāra, Sanātana, Sanandana and Viṣvaksena;
(5) *kṛṣṇa-pañcaka*: Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Vāsudeva, Saṅkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha;
(6) *upāsya-pañcaka*: Śrī Rādhā, Kṛṣṇa, Gaura, Gadādhara and *śrī gurudeva*;
(7) *pañca-tattva-pañcaka*: Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, Nityānanda, Advaita Ācārya, Gadādhara and Śrīvāsa.

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Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti and Akṣaya-tṛtīyā

On 22 April 1958, a special festival was observed for Akṣaya-tṛtīyā and for the anniversary of the inauguration of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti. Besides the lecture and *kīrtana*, a special religious assembly was organized that day in Śrī Uddhāraṇa Gauḍīya Maṭha in Chuṅchurā. *Paramārādhya* Śrīla Gurudeva addressed the assembly as follows.

"Akṣaya-tṛtīyā is the first day of Satya-yuga. It is on this day that the road to Śrī Badrī-nārāyaṇa is opened every year, and on Akṣaya-tṛtīyā, *śrī candana-yātrā* also takes place in Śrī Jagannātha Purī. Śrī Jagannāthajī's whole body is smeared with Malayan *candana* and Śrī Madana-mohanajī, the *vijaya-vigraha* of Śrī Jagannātha-deva, is seated in a well-decorated boat in Śrī Narendra-sarovara to perform His boat-pastimes.

"Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti was inaugurated on this very day in 1940. *Paramārādhya* Śrīla Gurudeva established *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* as Gauḍīya Vedānta, following the verse from *Garuḍa Purāṇa*, '*artho 'yaṁ brahma-sūtrāṇām – Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the purport of the *Vedānta-sūtra*.' *Gauḍīya-vedāntācārya* Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa also composed *Govinda-bhāṣya* following this same verse."

Śrīla Gurudeva went on to point out by comparative study that *Śrī Govinda-bhāṣya* is the topmost commentary on Vedānta, and that after *Govinda-bhāṣya*, Śrī Madhva Ācārya's commentary, *Aṇu-bhāṣya*, is superior to all the other commentaries. He further established that Śāṅkara Vedānta is insubstantial and useless.

Preaching in Goloka-gañja, Assam

On 1 May 1958, *paramārādhya* Śrīla Gurudeva went with a preaching party from Śrī Uddhāraṇa Gauḍīya Maṭha to Śrī Goloka-gañja Gauḍīya Maṭha in Assam. He stayed with his *sannyāsīs* and *brahmacārīs* in Śantinagara Pallī of Dhūbaḍī city at the house of Śrī Advaitacaraṇa dāsa Adhikārī, a prominent servant of the Samiti. From there he went to Kālīvāḍī and other places in Dhūbaḍī to lecture on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. In the *hari-sabhā-maṇḍapa* he gave three lectures: 'The solution to the problems of today', 'The necessity of a religious (*dharmika*) life' and '*Sanātana-dharma*'. The audience was highly impressed by his deep and powerful discourses.

In addition to Śrīla Gurudeva's lectures, *tridaṇḍi-svāmī* Śrī Bhaktivedānta Trivikrama Mahārāja and *tridaṇḍi-svāmī* Śrī Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja [the author] also gave lectures in various places that were illustrated with slide-shows. Very educated and respectful people aided the preaching party with their body, mind, words and wealth.

Establishing a primary school and the method of teaching in Pichladā

Within the Medinīpura district there is a small village named Pichladā, which Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu visited on his way to Śrī Jagannātha Purī. After receiving repeated requests by the village people, Śrīla Gurudeva established Śrīman Mahāprabhu's *pāda-pīṭha* (an altar with the imprint of Śrī Mahāprabhu's lotus feet) and Śrī Pichladā Gauḍīya Maṭha.

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Later, the villagers wanted to open a primary school in the village. For this purpose they formed a school board, which they duly registered. To run the school they needed a hall. On 23 December 1958, they sent a written request to Śrīla Gurudeva, who was at that time in Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha in Mathurā, requesting him to donate the old house of the *pāda-pīṭha* for use as a school. After reading their letter, Śrīla Gurudeva gave his ideas to the village people in the following letter:

"(1) Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti does not have even the slightest faith in the education provided by the present universities. I do not accept education which is opposed to Śrīman Mahāprabhu's teachings.

(2) I am not prepared to give up religious teachings (*dharma-śikṣā*) for rupees.

(3) Pichladā has become important by the touch of Śrīman Mahāprabhu's lotus feet. The villagers should therefore live a life favourable for the *sevā* of Śrīman Mahāprabhu, and they should make *this* the focus of education.

(4) Pichladā *pāda-pīṭha* is not an atheistic monument and Vedānta Samiti will not approve of the teaching of atheistic principles on its premises.

(5) I have no objection to signing the deed if the school board is willing to educate the students as per the prospectus provided by Vedānta Samiti.

(6) The village people should remember the strong reproach against the activities of the Kolkata University in the essay on *acintya-bhedābheda* in *Śrī Gauḍīya-patrikā's* 10th issue of the 10th year.

(7) In Śrī Dhāma Māyāpura, I established a high school which was sanctioned by the university. The law of the university was broken when priority was given to religious education. This example should also be followed here.

(8) It is impossible for the country to receive any kind of benefit from disobedient students. Religious ethics are the principal policy.

(9) Our government recognizes many Christian missionary schools. There is no doubt, then, that the primary school in Pichladā should make religious education its main priority and still be recognized.

(10) There should be no interference of any sort that is contrary to the spiritual objectives of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti.

(11) Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti will approve the establishment of any college, school or Sanskrit school for expanding the field of education. Such a school would be managed by the Samiti's committee, which would exclude any atheistic line of thought of the department of education.

(12) The demon Hiraṇyakaśipu sent his son Śrī Prahlāda Mahārāja to be educated at Ṣaṇḍa and Amarka's school, where the education was controlled by Śukrācārya. However, Prahlāda Mahārāja stressed education in *viṣṇu-bhakti*, thus violating the orders of the emperor, his father, and the headmaster, Śukrācārya. This is our ideal in expanding the field of education.

(13) Śrīman Mahāprabhu instructed the *jīvas* of the world about education in *Śrī Rāya Rāmānanda Saṁvāda* in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. We accept these instructions and not any kind of demoniac ideals.

(14) According to the university's rules and regulations, every college must observe Saturday as a half-day and Sunday as a full-day holiday. However, the Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda

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Institute in Śrī Dhāma Māyāpura observed the holidays on Ekādaśī and Pañcamī. This is contrary to the university rules. When local Christians and Muslims opposed this, the departmental inspector of the university came and issued an order against me, which I refused to accept. As a result, the financial support given by the university was stopped. In spite of this, the school in Śrī Dhāma Māyāpura is still running today, and is still recognized by the government.

(15) This letter should be read to the villagers. I am establishing and organizing more schools, Sanskrit schools and colleges, so I am well experienced in this area. We are not at all obliged to follow government statutes. People in an independent country are not bound to follow the rules in that country. The school should be established in an impeccable manner and become an ideal for the whole Medinīpura district. Please explain this to everyone."

The installation of the deities in Śrī Goloka-gañja Gauḍīya Maṭha

On 29 January 1959, the president of the Samiti, *ācārya* Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, imparted endless benefit to the world by installing the deities of Śrī Śrī Guru-Gauraṅga Rādhā-Vinoda-bihārījī in Śrī Goloka-gañja Gauḍīya Maṭha in Goloka-gañja, Assam. The daily *sevā* began in a splendid way. Śrī Bhagavān, the Supreme Absolute Truth who resides in the devotee's heart, mercifully appears in the outside world in His deity form. The spiritual sentiments in Śrīla Ācāryadeva's heart have been expressed in the mood of the deity form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is adorned with unprecedented sweetness because of embracing Rādhā and accepting Her lustre.

rādhā-cintā-niveśena
yasya kāntir vilopitā
śrī-kṛṣṇa-caraṇaṁ vande
rādhāliṅgita-vigraham

Śrī Rādhā-Vinoda-bihārī-tattvāṣṭakam

Morning *kīrtana* and *nagara-saṅkīrtana* were performed from the early morning until 8 a.m.; from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. there was *abhiṣeka* of the deities, reading from *śāstras*, *vaiṣṇava homa-yajña*, installation activities, *arcana-pūjā* and the *bhoga* offering. *Mahā-prasāda* was served to invited and uninvited guests until eleven at night. The Samiti's *tridaṇḍī-sannyāsīs* and learned members spoke at a religious assembly in the evening between 4 to 7 p.m. Finally, Śrīla Ācāryadeva gave a deep lecture filled with many emotional sentiments on *śrī vigraha-tattva*, the principle of the deity. He quoted a verse from *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Madhya-līlā* 5.1):

padbhyāṁ calan yaḥ pratimā-svarūpo
brahmaṇya-devo hi śatāha-gamyam
deśaṁ yayau vipra-kṛte 'dbhute 'haṁ
taṁ sākṣi-gopālam ahaṁ nato 'smi

I offer my *praṇāma* to Sākṣī-gopāla, the performer of transcendental activities, who appeared as *brahmaṇya-deva* (the Supreme Lord of brahminical culture) in deity form and walked for one hundred days to reach a distant place, only for the benefit of a *brāhmaṇa*.

Citing this verse, Śrīla Gurudeva said that the deity is Svayam Bhagavān, directly the Lord Himself. "*Pratimā naha tumi,—sākṣāt vrajendra-*

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nandana – You are not an image; You are directly Vrajendra-nandana" (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā* 5.96). Śrīman Mahāprabhu also expressed the same sentiments when taking *darśana* of Jagannātha-deva.

According to Śrī Śaṅkarācārya's doctrines, the imaginary form of *nirviśeṣa-brahma* is created for the benefit of *sādhakas*. There are five different imaginary forms of *nirviśeṣa-brahma* – Viṣṇu, Śiva, Śakti, Sūrya and Gaṇeśa – and the worshipper of these forms is called *pañca-upāsaka*. Śaṅkarācārya's conception is opposed to *śāstra* and is only a figment of his imagination. Imaginary images of stone, etc., can neither walk nor talk. The deity form of the Lord, however, is *cinmaya* (conscious) and *pūrṇa-brahma-svarūpa* (the complete personification of *brahma*). Bhagavān is not formless (*nirākāra*), without potency (*niḥśaktik*) or without attributes (*nirviśeṣa*). *Arūpavadeva tat-pradhānatvāt, na pratīke na hi saḥ, ānandamayo 'bhyāsāt* and other aphorisms of *Vedānta-sūtra* prove that Bhagavān has an eternal form, is the possessor of all potencies and is full of all transcendental qualities.

Śrīla Gurudeva refuted idol worship (*pratīkopāsanā*) and *nirākāra-vāda* with irrefutable logic and śāstric evidence. His wonderful lecture on *śrī vigraha-tattva,* filled with fundamental truths and philosophical conclusions, left deep impressions in the hearts of the audience. He pointed out the difference between idols and deities, and announced very seriously that *nirākāra-vādīs* and *nirviśeṣa-vādīs*, who are inimical to the eternal deity, have neither the right nor the qualification to install deities.

Vyāsa-pūjā and inauguration of the deities in the newly constructed temple in Śrī Gauravāṇī-Vinoda Āśrama in Khaḍagpura

From 27 February to 1 March 1959, there was a grand celebration of *śrī vyāsa-pūjā* and the inauguration of the deities in the newly constructed temple in Śrī Gauravaṇī-Vinoda Āśrama, Khaḍagpura. *Tridaṇḍī-svāmī* Śrīmad Bhakti Jīvana Janārdana Mahārāja, the president of the *āśrama,* insisted that *parivrājakācārya aṣṭottara-śata* Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja attend the festival. Śrīla Ācāryadeva stayed there for four days and performed the priestly duties for this grand occasion. Many *sannyāsīs* and *brahmacārīs* under his shelter also participated in the function.

27 February, Māghī-tṛtīyā, was the appearance day of Śrīla Ācāryadeva. On that day he personally performed the *pūjā* of his *gurudeva*, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda. By the order of Śrīla Gurudeva, Śrī Nityānanda Brahmacārī, who arrived from Ganjām (Orissa), performed the *āratī* of Śrīla Prabhupāda. During the *āratī*, devotees sang the *kīrtana 'Śrīla Prabhupāda āratī'*[16], which Śrīla Ācāryadeva himself had composed.

Tridaṇḍī-svāmī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja [the author] read for two days from the part of *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata* that describes the *vyāsa-pūjā* performed in the house of Śrīvāsa. In addition to this, he performed *kīrtana* during these days at the homes of respectable people in the town.

At the religious assembly in the evening of the next day, Śrīla Ācāryadeva spoke about *śrī*

16 Editor: song, translation and explanation are found on page 263 in Part Seven

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kṛṣṇa-līlā and gave a substantial lecture on the importance of religious life. He said, "'*Dharmeṇa hīnāḥ paśubhiḥ samānāḥ* – a life devoid of religion is the same as animal life' (*Hitopadeśa* 25). Eating, sleeping, fear and reproducing can be seen everywhere, even amongst the animals. If we are entrapped in these four activities, what is the advantage of gaining a human form of life, and how is human life superior to animal life? Therefore, it is written in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.9.29):

labdhvā su-durlabham idaṁ bahu sambhvānte
mānuṣyam artha-dam anityam apīha dhīraḥ
tūrṇaṁ yateta na pated anumṛtyu yāvan
niḥśreyasāya viṣayaḥ khalu sarvataḥ syāt

This rare human life is attained only after many, many births. Although temporary, it provides opportunity for achieving the highest benefit, which is available only through association of devotees (*sādhu-saṅga*). And only in the human form can one easily attain association of devotees. Therefore, an intelligent person should immediately, without wasting even a moment, endeavour for his ultimate good fortune before death overtakes him. And what is that ultimate good fortune? It is the cultivation of *śrī kṛṣṇa-bhakti*.

sa vai puṁsāṁ paro dharmo
yato bhaktir adhokṣaje
ahaituky apratihatā
yayātmā suprasīdati

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.2.6)

The topmost duty of human life is *śrī kṛṣṇa-bhakti*. And this *bhakti* should also be devoid of selfish motive, regular and uninterrupted. When one performs *bhakti* in this manner, the heart, perceiving the blissful form of Paramātmā, is gratified.

"There are many limbs of *bhagavad-bhakti*. Amongst them *harināma-saṅkīrtana* is the topmost for human beings in Kali-yuga:

harer nāma harer nāma harer nāmaiva kevalam
kalau nāsty eva nāsty eva nāsty eva gatir anyathā

"In *śrī harināma-saṅkīrtana*, faith is the only consideration. Only a faithful person is competent to perform *nāma-saṅkīrtana*. By attaining faith, anyone can perform *harināma-saṅkīrtana* in any situation. Even a person with no faith can get liberation without any difficulty by chanting Bhagavān's name. Considering that *harināma japa* and *saṅkīrtana* are so easy to practise, why are people indifferent towards them? This is answered by the Vedic injunction *nāyam ātmā bala-hīnena labhyaḥ* and the verse from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.2.37), *bhayaṁ dvitīyābhiniveśataḥ syāt*. We can clearly understand from these references that only a courageous and brave person can accept spiritual life and perform *harināma*. A cowardly person is only involved in material activities like eating, sleeping, fearing and mating. These scriptural references explain that those who are engrossed in statesmanship, financial policies, social welfare and so forth, are fearful and cowardly. Crushed by fear of *māyā* and ignorance, they uselessly ruin their lives flattering *māyā*. They do not have the courage to get free from *māyā's* prison and the agony of illusion."

On Śrīla Prabhupāda's appearance day, the devotees performed his *arcana-pūjā* and offered *puṣpāñjali* at his lotus feet. After that, the deities, auspiciously installed and worshipped

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by Śrīpāda Janārdana Mahārāja, entered Their newly constructed palatial temple, graced with nine domes. This function was performed according to the *pañcarātrika* method, and was accompanied by *śrī nāma-saṅkīrtana*. On the same day, *guru-pañcaka*, *ācārya-pañcaka*, *kṛṣṇa-pañcaka*, *upāsya-pañcaka*, etc., and *vaiṣṇava-homa* were performed according to *Vyāsa-pūjā-paddhati*. This *vyāsa-pūjā* remained the topic of discussion for a long time afterwards, not only in Khaḍagpura, but also throughout the entire Medinīpura district.

Protest against Śrī Rādhā-Govindanātha's Vaiṣṇava-darśana

Ācārya kesarī oṁ viṣṇupāda aṣṭottara-śata Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja strongly protested against the book *Acintya-bhedābheda-vāda* published by Bāgbāzār Gauḍīya Mission in Kolkata. All learned and respectable persons in the society were familiar with Ācārya Kesarī's protest. Śrīyuta Rādhā-Govindanātha had composed a large book, *Vaiṣṇava-darśana*, which is based on *Acintya-bhedābheda-vāda*, the ideas of both books being one and the same. Śrīla Ācārya Kesarī protested against *Vaiṣṇava-darśana* in the *Śrī Gauḍīya-patrikā* (4th issue, 11th year, pgs 159–160). "The pure Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya*, as followed and preached by Śrīman Mahāprabhu, is within the Madhva *sampradāya*. In my essay *Acintya-bhedābheda* (published in *Gauḍīya-patrikā*, 9th and 10th years), I have presented elaborate evidence protesting against the book *Acintya-bhedābheda-vāda* by Śrī Vidyāvinoda. In the same essay I have also voiced my objections to Nātha Mahāśaya's book *Vaiṣṇava-darśana*. The readers will understand my protest by reading this essay. Nowadays different assemblies are protesting against Śrī Rādhā-Govindanātha as a result of this essay being published. I hope that all the religious bodies in India will speak out against this book."

Śrīla Gurudeva wrote further on this subject matter. "We are happy to note that renowned *gosvāmīs* and *bābājī mahārājas*, etc., belonging to ordinary Vaiṣṇava groups from Rādhā-kuṇḍa, Vṛndāvana, Govardhana, Mathurā and other places have unanimously and vehemently protested against Śrī Rādhā-Govindanātha's book, *Vaiṣṇava-darśana*. On 22 April 1959, in Śrī Amiya Nimāī Gaurāṅga temple in Vṛndāvana, a huge assembly was arranged in which this book was evaluated. We are presenting a few points of our conclusions to the readers.

"First of all, the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas in this assembly pointed out that Śrī Nātha Mahāśaya is not initiated into any Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya*. Moreover, Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas have since Śrīman Mahāprabhu's time considered themselves as belonging to the Madhva Gauḍīyas or the Śrī Brahmā-Madhva-Gauḍīya *sampradāya*. The chairman of the assembly affirmed, with the consent of all the members present, that all Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas belong to the Śrī Madhvācārya *sampradāya*. Nātha Mahāśaya, however, rejects this conception. This shows how ignorant he is of the philosophical tradition. Vaiṣṇavas should not waste their time studying any book that attempts to contradict this truth.

"Secondly, the chairman affirmed that Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, the protector of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya*, is greatly revered by Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas. He is a genuine *sevaka-ācārya* of Śrīman Mahāprabhu and is acclaimed the topmost philosophical scholar in the Śrī Madhva-Gauḍīya *sampradāya*. There is not even a shadow of doubt in this regard. Nātha Mahāśaya

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does not accept Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa as an *ācārya* of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya*, and is therefore a great offender at Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa's lotus feet.

"The chairman's third point is that the views expressed by Nātha Mahāśaya in connection with *acintya-bhedābheda-vāda* are irrelevant. Consequently, if pure Vaiṣṇavas hear from or read his large book *Vaiṣṇava-darśana*, it will lead to their total destruction. That is to say, they will fall forever from the realm of authentic Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism. This assembly determined, following the previous *mahājanas*, that the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava community is accepted as a legitimate part of the Brahmā-Madhva-Gauḍīya *sampradāya* and that Nātha Mahāśaya's *Vaiṣṇava-darśana* is worthless, and should be shunned by Śrī Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas."

Śrīla Ācāryadeva in Assam

On 21 May 1959, *paramārādhya* Śrīla Ācāryadeva travelled from Śrī Dhāma Navadvīpa to Śrī Goloka-gañja Gauḍīya Maṭha in Assam, after receiving an urgent letter from Śrī Paramānanda dāsa Adhikārī (Śrī Palāśa Candraghūha) of Dhūbaḍī. The train was delayed for nearly twelve hours due to an accident at Kaṭihāra Junction. Having heard the news of Śrī Ācāryadeva's arrival by telegram, the residents of the *maṭha* welcomed him at Goloka-gañja railway station and respectfully accompanied him to the *maṭha* in the midst of *saṅkīrtana* with *mṛdaṅga* and *karatālas*. At the *maṭha*, the renounced and householder devotees performed Śrī Ācāryadeva's *pūjā* and *āratī*, and had *darśana* of the exquisitely beautiful deities of Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga Rādhā-Vinoda-bihārījī. They praised the devotee who had donated the deities, saying, "The unparalleled, transcendental beauty of these deities is not to be found anywhere else in Assam."

Śrī Ācāryadeva addressed the assembled devotees saying, "One should not take *darśana* of the deities with the eyes. Proper *darśana* is through the ears. This is because *darśana* through the eyes is material and full of faults, so there is always the possibility of delusion. There is much less possibility of error and delusion in *darśana* through the ears, by hearing. That is why the *mantra* is given through the ears at the time of *dīkṣā*. *Śrī gurudeva* gives *divya-jñāna*, transcendental knowledge, through the ears. All our senses are instruments for our gratification, and our eyes enable us to enjoy beauty. However, *darśana* of the deities is not meant to satisfy our sense of vision, but rather to remove to a far distant place our greed to enjoy with the eyes. Instead of thinking 'I am very blissfully having *darśana* of the deities', we should think, 'The deities will give me a merciful glance.' It is with this attitude that we will achieve our supreme welfare. Bhagavān and His deity form are not objects of sense perception. We cannot accept Them through any of our senses, because whatever we accept through our senses is all material and intended for our enjoyment. But Śrī Bhagavān actually is the only enjoyer; we are all meant to be enjoyed by Him. That means that we are not the seer, but rather the one who is seen."

Śrīla Ācāryadeva then explained this subject in a way that was easier to understand. "Suppose there is a ripe mango in front of us. The eyes can see it, the skin can touch it, the nose can smell it and the tongue can taste it, but the ears have no connection with these four senses. Whatever subject matter the ears comprehend is completely

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> "The ears comprehend words with which the other senses have no connection. That is why the *sad-guru* gives transcendental sound vibration, *śabda-brahma*, in the ear of the bona fide disciple. ... This is why, amongst all the senses, the ear is the most beneficial for us."

beyond the perception of the remaining four knowledge-acquiring senses (*jñānendriyas*). In other words, in regard to that subject matter, these four senses are helpless and have no connection with it. The ears comprehend words with which the other senses have no connection. That is why the *sad-guru* gives transcendental sound vibration, *śabda-brahma,* in the ear of the bona fide disciple, *sat-śiṣya*. Before giving *śabda-brahma, gurudeva* purifies the disciple with *hari-kathā*. Then he gives *śabda-brahma* in the form of *śrī harināma* and the *dīkṣā-mantras*. You should try to realize this essential truth. This is why, amongst all the senses, the ear is the most beneficial for us." The whole audience was fascinated to hear Śrīla Gurudeva's new and unprecedented view, and they unanimously agreed that they had never heard such a beautiful *siddhānta* before.

Śrī Ācāryadeva stayed at Goloka-gañja Maṭha for three days, and then went to Dhūbaḍī town with his associates, at Śrī Paramānanda dāsa Adhikārī's request. Śrī Paramānanda Prabhu's wife, Tāriṇī-devī, had left this world some time before. Śrīla Ācāryadeva now supervised her *śrāddha-saṁskāra* according to the *sātvata vaiṣṇava-smṛti, Sat-kriyā-sāra-dīpikā*. Śrī Sanat Kumāra Bhakti-śāstrī Bhāgavat-bhūṣaṇa performed the priestly duties at this *śrāddha* ceremony, following Śrīla Gurudeva's order. Afterwards everyone was served *mahā-prasāda*.

The honourable Paramānanda Prabhu (Palāśa Bābū) was very impressed with Śrīla Gurudeva's preaching, and repeatedly requested Śrīla Gurudeva to establish a *bhakti* preaching centre in Dhūbaḍī. For this purpose he offered his house in the district of Vidyāpāḍā in Dhūbaḍī town, and also gave some money. He formally registered the centre in Śrī Ācāryadeva's name on 29 May 1959.

After this, Śrīla Ācāryadeva travelled with his associates to Amāyāpura by bus via Rangiyā. There he visited the homes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Govinda dāsa Adhikārī, Śrīyuta Prāṇeśvara dāsa Adhikārī (Saudāgara Prabhu) and Vāṇeśvara dāsa Adhikārī. After preaching *śuddhā-bhakti* there he returned to Śrī Uddhāraṇa Gauḍīya Maṭha, Chuṅchurā.

Installation of the deities at Pichladā Gauḍīya Maṭha

Paramārādhyatama Śrīla Gurudeva preached *śuddha-bhakti* extensively for several years in Pichladā and in Assam, and the faithful people in the area repeatedly requested him to establish a Śrī Vedānta Samiti preaching centre there. Moved by their strong insistence, Śrīla Gurudeva agreed to open a preaching centre near Pichladā *pāda-pīṭha*. A short time before *snāna-yātrā*, he sent *tridaṇḍī-svāmī* Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Paramārthī Mahārāja with a few *brahmacārīs* to arrange for the installation of the deities. He himself arrived in Pichladā village with many of his *sannyāsīs* and *brahmacārīs*. *Tridaṇḍī-svāmī* Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta

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Trivikrama Mahārāja also reached Pichladā one day before Snāna-pūrṇimā.

Śrī Pichladā Gauḍīya Maṭha was established on Śrī Jagannātha-deva's Snāna-pūrṇimā, 20 June 1959 and the deities of Śrī Śrī Guru, Nityānanda-Gaurāṅga and Rādhā-Vinoda-bihārījī were also installed on that day.

On the day of the installation, after early morning *kīrtana* and *adhivāsa-kīrtana* (*kīrtana* before a ceremony starts), the temple and *maṭha* premises were decorated with mango leaves, flower garlands, flags, banners and other auspicious items. In accordance with the rules of *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*, twelve banana trees, twelve pipal trees and twelve *gūlara* (wild fig) trees were placed on the four sides of the temple. Twelve water pots marked with *svastikas* were placed in front of the banana trees, and mango leaves and coconuts were placed on top of the water pots. Another five water pots were filled with sacred water that had been collected from a holy river some distance away with *nagara-saṅkīrtana* and a band party. These five pots were placed in the bathing chamber, or *snāna-maṇḍapa*, of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Vinoda-bihārījī.

After the arrival of the deities on the altar of the *snāna-maṇḍapa*, the priests performed *mahā-abhiṣeka* of Śrī Śālagrāma Śila (the representative form of Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nityānanda) with milk, yoghurt, ghee, honey, sugar and one hundred and eight pots of fragrant water sanctified by *mantras*. During the *abhiṣeka* the sound of the *kīrtana* with *mṛdaṅga* and *karatālas* mixed with the sound of conch shells, the *jaya-dhvani* and the ladies ululating reverberated in every direction. At the same time, *prasthānatraya* (i.e., Veda, Upaniṣad, *Viṣṇu-sahasra-nāma*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Gopāla-sahasra-nāma* and *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*) were recited with loud voices on all sides of the temple. After the *abhiṣeka*, while the atmosphere was resounding with the transcendental sounds of the *saṅkīrtana-yajña* and the recitation of the Vedas and other scriptures, the deities were taken to the altar. Śrīla Ācāryadeva himself performed the consecration of the deities with Vedic *mantras*. Afterwards the altar doors opened and thousands of assembled faithful people took Their *darśana* accompanied by loud *jaya-dhvani*. After *pūjā-arcana* and *bhoga-āratī*, supremely delicious *mahā-prasāda* was distributed to about five thousand faithful people.

After evening *āratī* and *tulasī-parikramā*, there was a large assembly at which Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Paramārthī Mahārāja, Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Trivikrama Mahārāja and others spoke. After that, Śrī Ācāryadeva lectured vigorously for two hours. His very substantial discourse was filled with *siddhānta* concerning the deity and the *maṭha* and temples. He talked about the situation in modern India and about the village of Pichladā and its residents. He also spoke about *śrī vigraha-tattva*, explaining what a *maṭha* actually is and how the *maṭha-mandira* is factually beyond the three modes of material nature. He went on to discuss personalism (*sākāra-vāda*) and impersonalism (*nirākāra-vāda*); Christianity's personalism, impersonalism and fruitive mentality (*karma-vāda*); Islam's personalism and impersonalism; Buddhist and Jain personalism; and Ācārya Śaṅkara's personalism and impersonalism. He then made a critical study of different Indian doctrines and sects, including the personalism–impersonalism of Haṅkaradeva of Assam, and the impersonalism of Kabīr, Nānak and others. After that he talked about the progressive development of atheistic society in India, the necessity for *maṭhas* and temples, and other subjects.

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"*Dharma* does not have a supreme place in the present independent India. *Adharma* is manifest under the cover of people's indifference to *dharma*. As a result, an indescribable violent dance of immorality, licentiousness and bad thought is running rampant in our country."

Śrīla Gurudeva said, "*Dharma* does not have a supreme place in the present independent India. *Adharma* is manifest under the cover of people's indifference to *dharma*. As a result, an indescribable violent dance of immorality, licentiousness and bad thought is running rampant in our country.

"Nowadays, under the guise of communism, we see very forceful efforts to drag elevated people down and make them equal to inferior people. However, nowhere do we see any corresponding effort to elevate inferior people so they become equal to the superior class. This trend is clearly visible in all fields, such as politics, social movements, economics and education.

"India is a pure and religious land, which is why *Gītā* calls the great battlefield *dharma-kṣetra*, the field of religion. In our country we can see many impersonal religious societies. In reality impersonalists cannot at all abandon the ideology of personalism. They want to absorb themselves in an imaginary impersonal meditation while keeping a personal form in the centre. It is this imaginary, impersonal meditation which has given birth to atheism in our country. The doctrine that the Lord has no form, no character, no quality and no power is completely false and imaginary. It is also the origin of the Buddhists' voidism (*śūnya-vāda*), or atheism, which is opposed to the Vedas. This philosophy is completely contradicted by the Vedas and by all other *śāstras*, which consistently acknowledge the Lord's eternal form, or *svarūpa*. To acknowledge this is theism. Persons who do not accept the eternal form of Bhagavān are atheists." The audience was very impressed by his lecture, which was full of deep *siddhānta* and logic, supported by proofs from *śāstras*.

At this ceremony, Śrī Sudāma Sakhā Brahmacārī became a special object of mercy because of his efforts in collecting ornaments, clothes, pots and other items in Navadvīpa-dhāma and Kolkata and bringing them to Pichladā, and for his great endeavour in other services for the installation of the deities. The pious Śrī Prabodhacandra Paṇḍyā Mahāśaya from Kāśimpura district donated the Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Vinoda-bihārī deities and Their *siṁhāsana* and covered most of the festival expenses. He deserves appreciation for this service and is the special object of the mercy of the Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti. The Samiti is grateful to the honourable Śrī Gajendra-mokṣaṇa dāsa Adhikārī for donating the deity of Śrīman Mahāprabhu and for rice and other items for the festival. He provided almost forty maund (about sixteen hundred kilograms) of rice ever year for the Śrī Dhāma Navadvīpa *parikramā*. His ideal service is praiseworthy in all respects. Above all, Śrī Govinda dāsa Adhikārī of Pichladā is an object of mercy for his endeavour with his life, wealth and intelligence to establish the *maṭha*. The endeavours and service of Śrī Kokila Rakṣita, Śrī Govinda dāsa, Nirāpada Māiti and Śrī Murārī Mohana are also specially notable.

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A philosophical assembly in Keśavapura

Śrī Ayodhyānātha dāsa Adhikārī, from Keśavapura village in the Medinīpura district, was a one-pointed Vaiṣṇava, initiated by Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti's founder-*ācārya* and president. Although he took birth in a lower-class poor family, he had firm faith in Śrīman Mahāprabhu's pure *bhakti-dharma*. He was a *gṛhastha* Vaiṣṇava, yet he regularly performed *arcana-pūjāna* and *sādhana-bhajana*. He always abstained from eating meat and fish, from smoking, from illicit association with women and so on.

One year previously, in 1958, some important people in the village were collecting donations for the public worship of Śītalā Mātā which was to take place in his village, and they insisted that Śrī Ayodhyānātha dāsa Adhikārī donate two rupees for the *pūjā*. Śrī Ayodhyānātha, however, very politely replied, "We are initiated into the Gauḍīya *vaiṣṇava-dharma* proclaimed by Śrīman Mahāprabhu, and we are fully under the shelter of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti. Pure devotees are not allowed to perform demigod worship, which is prohibited in *Gītā* and other scriptures. For this reason, I am unable to give any donation for this *pūjā*." The villagers became disturbed when they heard this, and they said, "Demigod worship has been going on since ancient times, and the scriptures confirm this. Let's call an assembly, and when we have heard the arguments on both sides, we will decide whether demigod worship is proper or not." It was agreed to call an assembly in the coming month of Śrāvaṇa (July–August), but severe floods prevented this from taking place.

During the month of Śrāvaṇa in the following year, 1959, a philosophical assembly was arranged in Keśavapura village and eminent *smārta paṇḍitas* were called to support the villagers' side. Śrī Ayodhyānātha went to Śrīla Ācārya Kesarī's lotus feet in Chuṅchurā Maṭha and in a very moving voice repeatedly requested him to take part in the assembly. "If you do not go there and refute the arguments of the opposite side," he said, "it will be impossible for me to stay in that village. They will simply throw me out."

Before this occurrence, it had been decided that Śrīla Ācāryadeva would go to Pichladā for the installation of the deities, which was to take place at the same time as the assembly in Keśavapura. But when Śrīla Gurudeva heard Śrī Ayodhyānātha's distress-filled prayers, he decided to go to Keśavapura with Śrīpāda Trivikrama Mahārāja and other leading *sannyāsīs* and *brahmacārīs*.

In the assembly, the *smārta paṇḍitas* raised this objection on behalf of the villagers: "Demigod worship is described in our Indian scriptures and has been going on since ancient times. We find many proofs of this in the *Skanda* and *Padma Purāṇas*. The worship of Kātyāyanī, Yogamāyā, Durgā, Kālī, Śiva and others is even seen in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, so why do Vaiṣṇavas not worship demigods?"

On *paramārādhya* Śrīla Gurudeva's order, Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Trivikrama Mahārāja replied first. He used evidence from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Gītā* and other *śāstras* to show that the results of demigod worship are temporary. Materialistic people worship demigods to fulfil different material desires. However, all the results are of a temporary nature. Indeed, even those who have attained Svarga will fall down again to the material world after enjoying the results of their pious activities. Vaiṣṇavas, however, are exclusively devoted to *śrī kṛṣṇa-bhajana* and do not have any material desires in their hearts.

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After this, Śrīla Ācāryadeva explained very clearly that Śrī Ayodhyānātha had not done anything wrong. On the contrary, all *śāstras* approve of his action. "If the *gopīs* were worshipping Kātyāyanī, then why did Śrī Kṛṣṇa have to come personally to give the benediction? The reason is that Kṛṣṇa and His *svarūpa-śakti* Yogamāyā (Kātyāyanī) are non-different: *śakti-śaktimator abhedaḥ*. Therefore, in this case, *kātyāyanī-pūjā* is the same as the *pūjā* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself put an end to the worship of Indra and other demigods, and He also says in the *Gītā*, *yānti deva-vratā devān pitṝn yānti pitṛ-vratāḥ* (9.25) and *kāmais tais tair hṛta-jñānāḥ prapadyante 'nya-devatāḥ* (7.20). Evidence that the results of demigod worship are temporary is also found in *Padma Purāṇa*: *yas tu nārāyaṇaṁ devaṁ brahma-rudrādi-daivataiḥ / samatvenaiva vīkṣeta sa pāṣaṇḍī bhaved dhruvam*. The demigods cannot relieve us from the vicious circle of birth and death nor can they give us *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*.

"The second point is that in *Padma Purāṇa* demigod worship is prohibited for one-pointed Vaiṣṇavas. The performance of demigod worship is considered to be an offence to the holy name. Statements from *śāstra* are even cited in *Sat-kriyā-sāra-dīpikā* prohibiting one-pointed Vaiṣṇavas from performing demigod worship." When the opposite side heard Śrīla Gurudeva's vigorous lecture, they became speechless.

The next day, another religious assembly was arranged on the village school premises. There Śrīla Ācāryadeva emphasized the importance of leading a religious life and said that the only duty of human beings is to devout themselves to spiritual life. A life devoid of spiritual practices is simply animal life. The main religion in Kali-yuga is the chanting of Bhagavān's names. *Kīrtana* of Bhagavān's names and hearing *hari-kathā*, in accordance with Vaiṣṇava etiquette, are the only means to make human life successful.

After preaching *śuddha-bhakti* in this way, through a comparative study of different subject matters, Śrīla Gurudeva and his party returned to Śrī Uddhāraṇa Gauḍīya Maṭha in Chuṅchurā.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's disappearance festival in Chuṅchurā

On 6 July 1959, the disappearance day of Śrīla Saccidānanda Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was celebrated in Śrī Uddhāraṇa Gauḍīya Maṭha with hearing (*śravaṇa*) and chanting (*kīrtana*). Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura is the best of the followers of Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara and Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī and is non-different from *śrī gaura-śakti* Śrī Gadādhara. *Kīrtana* started from early morning with songs glorifying Śrī Hari, Guru and Vaiṣṇavas and the *mahājanas'* songs of *viraha*, separation. Later there was a discussion of Śrī Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's transcendental character, the significance of his appearance in the present age and other subjects. *Āratī* was performed at noon, after *arcana-pūjā* of the deities and offering of *rāja-bhoga*. After that wonderful delicious *mahā-prasāda* was served to the assembled devotees.

In the religious assembly in the evening, Śrīla Guru Mahārāja said in his lecture, "Today is the disappearance day of *gaura-śakti* Saccidānanda Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and of *gaura-śakti* Gadādhara Paṇḍita Gosvāmī. Both *mahāpuruṣas* appeared in this world to fulfil the innermost desire (*mano-'bhīṣṭa sevā*) of Śrīman Mahāprabhu. After completing this *sevā*, they entered *nitya-līlā* on this day. This auspicious day comes every year to shower us with mercy and to

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demonstrate the supremacy of *vipralambha-rasa*. Although Śrī Vṛṣabhānu-nandinī is insulted and abused in hundreds and hundreds of ways, She does not abandon Śrī Kṛṣṇa's *vipralambha-sevā*. This sacred day auspiciously arrives every year to teach us devotion to the service of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda, and so that we can reject the association of people who are unfavourable to the happiness enjoyed by Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda in Their meeting. Hence, this day is called the *adhivāsa-tithi* (the eve before a function begins) of the *ratha-yātrā* of Śrī Nīlācalanātha, who is non-different from Śrī Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

"Śrī Jagannātha-deva's *dhāma*, Nīlācala, is called Mathurā or Dvārakā, and Sundarācala (Guṇḍicā) is known as Vṛndāvana. Nīlācala is full of *aiśvarya* and Sundarācala is full of *mādhurya*. Śrī Kṛṣṇa desires to leave Nīlācala and go to Sundarācala (Vṛndāvana) to meet the *gopīs*. When He proceeds to Vṛndāvana, Rukmiṇī and other Lakṣmīs try their level best to prevent Him from going there. Seeing this, Kamala Mañjarī, who takes the side of Śrīmatī Rādhikā – the shelter of the pure *rasa* of magnanimity (*audārya*) and sweetness (*mādhurya*) – becomes restless and abandons this manifest *līlā*. Situated in her eternally perfected form (*nitya-siddha-deha*) she enters Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda's midday pastimes. Saccidānanda Vinoda-vāṇī-vaibhava (Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura) appointed Śrī Rādhā's Nayana Maṇi Śuddhā-sarasvatī (Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura) as a preacher established in *siddhānta*, to verify the supremacy of *audārya-mādhurya-rasa*. This is the special mystery of this day."

A huge assembly was held at 5 p.m. on the same day. A picture of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was seated on a beautiful *siṁhāsana*. Afterwards, there was *kīrtana* with prayers to *śrī guru*, *Śrī Godruma-candra-bhajanopadeśa* (*Instructions for Worshipping Śrī Caitanya, the Moon of Godrumadvīpa*, by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura) and Vaiṣṇavas' songs of separation (*viraha*). The assembly started after the arrival of *paramārādhyatama* Śrīla Ācāryadeva. On his instruction the *brahmacārīs*, *tridaṇḍī-svāmī* Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Mahārāja and finally Śrīla Ācāryadeva himself gave lectures filled with beautiful *siddhānta* and deep philosophical truths.

Śrī Jagannātha-deva's ratha-yātrā

On 6–17 July 1959, the *śrī ratha-yātrā* festival was celebrated grandly for twelve days at Śrī Uddhāraṇa Gauḍīya Maṭha. Śrī Jagannāthajī ascended a beautifully decorated chariot and was brought to Guṇḍicā Mandira (Śrī Śyāmasundara temple) accompanied by a royal *nagara-saṅkīrtana*. Even the stony hearts of the atheists melted when they heard the *kīrtana*, which was filled with deep affection for Śrī Jagannātha-deva, and saw the devotees dancing along the road. Many people crowded the street to take *darśana* of Śrī Jagannātha-deva and to pull the rope of His chariot. Faithful people offered *bhoga* to Śrī Jagannātha on the street, and the *pujārī* then distributed it to the crowd. It was wonderful to see how eager the people were to have *darśana* of Śrī Jagannātha and to take His *prasāda*. The whole atmosphere resounded with Śrī Jagannātha's *jaya-dhvani*. Sometimes the chariot stopped for awhile, and sometimes it went on slowly, until it finally reached Śrī Śyāmasundara temple, where Śrī Jagannātha-deva stayed for nine days, sporting in Vṛndāvana.

On the day of *śrī guṇḍicā-mārjana* and *herā-pañcamī*, Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Trivikrama

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Mahārāja read from *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* at Śrī Guṇḍicā (Śrī Śyāmasundara temple). At the *maṭha*, Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Mahārāja read about *ratha-yātrā* from *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. They also gave lectures illustrated with slides on *śrī gaura-līlā* and *śrī kṛṣṇa-līlā*. Beginning on the *ratha-yātrā* day, Śrīla Ācāryadeva gave a series of discourses filled with many different instructions and *siddhāntas*. He spoke on *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* for four days, and spent another four days on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Here is a summary of the essence of his talks.

On *snāna-yātrā* day a very festive *mahābhiṣeka* of Śrī Jagannātha, Baladeva and Subhadrā-devī is performed according to rules and regulations. Brahmā and all the other demigods participate in this ceremony without being seen. Afterwards, the curtain of the Jagannātha temple is closed and there is no *darśana* for fifteen days, because Śrī Jagannātha becomes sick from bathing too much. This period is called *anavasara*, and Lakṣmījī serves Him alone at that time. During that period, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the embodiment of *vipralambha-rasa*, used to go to Ālālanātha, because He was so restless in separation from Jagannātha. After *anavasara*, on the second day of *śukla-pakṣa*, the waxing moon, from the day after the dark moon till the full moon, Śrī Jagannātha, Baladeva and Subhadrā ascend three different chariots and start their journey for Sundarācala (Guṇḍicā). But Śrī Jagannātha-deva does not tell His wife Lakṣmījī that He is going to Vṛndāvana. After sporting for nine days in Vṛndāvana (Sundarācala), He returns to Śrī Mandira in Nīlācala. Going to Sundarācala is called *ratha-yātrā*, the day they come back from there is called the return *yātrā*, and the fifth day from the beginning of the *ratha-yātrā* is called *herā-pañcamī*.

There is a special meaning of *herā-pañcamī*. The day after Śrī Jagannātha's departure, Śrī Lakṣmījī is eagerly waiting for her Lord to return, and when He does not return after four days, she becomes very anxious. In an angry and sulky mood she climbs her beautifully decorated chariot and goes searching for Śrī Jagannāthajī in the night with her maidservants. Somehow she reaches Vṛndāvana, and there she quarrels with Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His beloved *gopīs* and makes Him promise that He will return quickly. After that she returns to Nīlācala temple. *Herā* means 'to search', and because this pastime takes place on the fifth day (Pañcamī) it is called *herā-pañcamī*.

One day before the *ratha-yātrā* the Guṇḍicā temple is washed clean so that Śrī Jagannātha, Baladeva and Subhadrā can reside there happily. The temple is first swept to remove dust and stones, and then it is washed with water and wiped dry with cloths. Śrīman Mahāprabhu also used to clean Śrī Guṇḍicā temple together with His associates while performing *hari-saṅkīrtana*. The purpose of this pastime is to wash and dust one's heart, which should become like a spotless temple fit for the Supreme Lord. He will never live in the heart of a devotee who still has desires for material enjoyment, heavenly happiness and liberation. This is one of the main aspects of the *śrī ratha-yātrā* festival.

Ordinary people cannot easily understand the meaning of the *ratha-yātrā* celebration. However, the *śrī rūpānuga* Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas' understanding of this subject matter is full of excellent *siddhānta*. They are very dear to Śrī Śacīnandana Gaurahari, who is Himself resplendent with the moods and lustre of Śrīmatī Rādhikā. The *vraja-ramaṇīs* were in deep distress because of separation from Kṛṣṇa after He left for Mathurā. While they were taking their beloved

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Kṛṣṇa from Kurukṣetra (Dvārakā) to Śrī Dhāma Vṛndāvana, they thought, "*sei ta' parāṇa-nātha pāinu, yāhā lāgi' madana-dahane jhuri' genu* – today we are meeting with our beloved *prāṇanātha*, after suffering for a long time in separation from Him" (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā* 13.113). The *vraja-ramaṇīs* are doing this only to serve and please Kṛṣṇa, not for their own happiness. Those who have not realized this deep understanding of the *śrī rūpānuga* Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas are not qualified to participate in this great ceremony. They cannot serve Śrī Jagannātha because they are attached to material enjoyment. As long as attachment for the material world is strong in the heart, then there can be no attraction or taste for *darśana* of transcendental Jagannātha. The main object of *ratha-yātrā* is to engage the whole world in the service of Śrī Jagannātha.

"As long as attachment for the material world is strong in the heart, then there can be no attraction or taste for *darśana* of transcendental Jagannātha. The main object of *ratha-yātrā* is to engage the whole world in the service of Śrī Jagannātha."

Śrī Gaurahari, who is non-different from Śrī Vrajendra-nandana, instructed the whole world by performing the pastime of cleansing Śrī Guṇḍicā with His associates. Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti organizes this festival every year to give everyone a golden opportunity to participate.

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Celebration of Śrī Janmāṣṭamī and Śrī Nandotsava at Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha, Mathurā

1959 was a particularly noteworthy year for Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha, as *paramārādhya* Śrīla Gurudeva, the Samiti's founder-*ācārya*, arrived there with some disciples a week before Janmāṣṭamī. This year, the servants of the *maṭha* enthusiastically observed Śrī Janmāṣṭamī by fasting for the whole day, performing *saṅkīrtana*, reading *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, offering *bhoga* and so on. At midnight the deities' *abhiṣeka* was performed with *saṅkīrtana*, the blowing of conch shells and the *jaya-dhvani* of thousands of faithful people. That evening Śrīla Ācāryadeva gave a deep philosophical lecture filled with scriptural conclusions. By quoting the following verses, he established that Kṛṣṇa is the non-dual Supreme Absolute Truth (*advaya-jñāna para-tattva*): *ete cāṁśa-kalāḥ puṁsaḥ kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam* (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.3.28), *aho bhāgyam aho bhāgyaṁ nanda-gopa-vrajaukasām / yan-mitraṁ paramānandaṁ pūrṇaṁ brahma sanātanam* (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.14.32), *īśvaraḥ paramaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ / anādir ādir govindaḥ sarva-kāraṇa-kāraṇam* (*Brahma-saṁhita* 5.1) and *mattaḥ parataraṁ nānyat kiñcid asti dhanañjaya* (*Bhagavad-gītā* 7.7). Apart from this, he also established the distinctive characteristics of Śrī Yaśodā-nandana in relation to Śrī Devakī-nandana.

Observing kārtika-vrata in Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha

All the *maṭhas* under the jurisdiction of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti observed *kārtika-vrata, dāmodara-vrata* and *niyama-sevā* from 16 October to 15 November 1959. This year, *kārtika-vrata* was celebrated with special festivities and great enthusiasm because of the presence of *paramārādhya* Śrīla Gurudeva himself. For the whole month, everyone observed the many regular, distinctive aspects of this great *vrata*, such as *śrī maṅgala-āratī*, morning *kīrtana*, reading from *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, reading from *Brahma-sūtra* (or *Vedānta-sūtra*), *tulasī-parikramā*, *āhnika* and other duties, discussions of *bhakti* literature, *bhoga-āratī*, *iṣṭagoṣṭhī*, *mahā-prasāda sevā*, *sandhyā-āratī* and so forth. The devotees also followed ideals such as moderation in eating and drinking, sleeping on the floor and taking *prasāda* on leaf plates instead of metal plates.

During *śrī dāmodara-vrata*, Chidghanānanda Brahmacārī gave discourses on *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* every morning; in the evenings *tridaṇḍi-svāmī* Śrī Bhaktivedānta Trivikrama Mahārāja explained the Nimi-Navayogendra dialogue in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. In the afternoons, from 3–5 p.m., *paramārādhya oṁ viṣṇupāda aṣṭottara-śata* Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja himself gave elaborate commentaries on *Vedānta-darśana* and *Govinda-bhāṣya*. He completed explanations up to the first and second lines of the eleventh *sūtra* of the first chapter of *Govinda-bhāṣya*.

During his discourse, Śrīla Gurudeva summarized eight other authentic commentaries on Vedānta and established the supremacy of the *Govinda-bhāṣya* among them. He read regularly from the commentaries of Śrī Śaṅkara, Bhāskara, Rāmānuja, Madhva, Vijñāna Bhikṣu, Vallabha and

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Nimbāditya, as well as from *gauḍīya vedānta-ācārya* Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa's *Śrī Govinda-bhāṣya*. Śrīla Ācāryadeva also emphasized *mahā-mahopādhyāya* Śrīyuta Haridāsa Siddhānta-vāgīśa Mahāśaya's *Bhāgavat-bhāṣya* at many points in the discussion. Along with the *sannyāsīs* and *brahmacārīs* from the Samiti, educated, respected and eminent scholars from Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma were also present in the audience during the discourse on *Govinda-bhāṣya*. Among them were Śrī Kumuda Kamala Nāga (BA, BL), Śrī Mākhana Lāl Sāhā (BA, assistant headmaster of Navadvīpa Śikṣā-mandira), *paṇḍita* Śrīyuta Navīna-candra Cakravartī (*smṛti-vyākaraṇa-tīrtha*) and Śrī Vardākānta Datta worth mentioning. The respectable Varadā Bābū, a great scholar of Śrī Śaṅkarācārya's *kevalādvaita-vāda*, was also present as an opponent, and this gave the audience a rare opportunity to hear a comparative discussion on *Govinda-bhāṣya* by Śrīla Ācāryadeva.

Even after the completion of *śrī dāmodara-vrata*, the study of *Govinda-bhāṣya* continued for another five days, due to the special request of the elderly Varadā Bābū and Śrī Kumuda Kamala Nāga. During these last days there was an elaborate and detailed discussion of aphorisms such as *athāto brahma-jijñāsā*, *janmādy asya yataḥ* and *śāstra-yonitvāt*. While explaining these *sūtras*, Śrīla Ācāryadeva specifically established Śrī Bhagavān's name, form, qualities and pastimes and at the same time used logic and scriptural evidence to refute Śaṅkarācārya's view that *brahma* is *nirviśeṣa* (without personality), *niḥśaktik* (without power), *arūpa* (formless) and *nirguṇa* (without attributes). He also established that *bhakti*, not *jñāna* or *mukti*, is the subject matter expounded in *Vedānta-sūtra*. The words *jñāna* and *mukti* are not mentioned anywhere in the five hundred and fifty aphorisms of *Vedānta-sūtra*. Rather, it is only Śrī Vrajendra-nandana Govinda who is established, along with His *prema-mayī bhakti*, in *Vedānta-sūtra's* aphorisms: *ānandamayo 'bhyāsāt*, *api saṁrādhane pratyakṣānumānābhyām*, etc. Finally, *harināma-saṅkīrtana* is clearly specified by the aphorism *anāvṛttiḥ śabdād anāvṛttiḥ śabdāt*, and this is made clearer still by the confirmation of *harer nāma harer nāma harer nāmaiva kevalam* and Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's words *paraṁ vijayate śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtanam*.

Vedānta-sūtra establishes that *advaya-jñāna para-tattva* Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His *śakti* Śrīmatī Rādhikā are non-different, and thus clearly indicates the worship of Śrī Yugala. The Upaniṣads show that *para-tattva* can never be *nirviśeṣa*, *niḥśaktik*, *arūpa* and *nirguṇa*, without transcendental qualities. *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (3.1) states: "*yato vā imāni bhūtāni jāyante, yena jātāni jīvanti, yat prayanty abhisaṁviśanti, tad vijijñāsasva tad brahma* – One should know that *brahma* is He from whom all living beings are born, by whose power they remain alive, and into whom they enter at the end. He is the one about whom you should inquire, He is *brahma*." In this verse three cases are used, namely the ablative case (*apādāna*), the instrumental case (*karaṇa*) and the locative case (*adhikaraṇa*). How, then, can *brahma* be impersonal, without potencies or form?[17]

Śrīla Gurudeva's explanation of all these subject matters was ever-fresh and very remarkable. On the last day, Varadā Bābū said, "People would benefit if the reading of *Govinda-bhāṣya* continued for another few days. I have never before heard such a beautiful discussion on Vedānta in my Navadvīpa town." Śrīla

17 Editor: for more clarity regarding this verse, see *Jaiva-dharma*, Chapter 18

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Observing *cāturmāsya-vrata*

"Fully mature *bhakti*, which is the fruit of observing *cāturmāsya-vrata*, will not develop if one only honours *ūrjā-vrata* and not the full four months. In fact, this negligence actually reveals disrespect for *cāturmāsya-vrata*. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His associates observed *cāturmāsya-vrata* with great conviction and devotion, and in this way they instructed *sādhakas* in the whole Vaiṣṇava community as to the means of attaining *bhakti*."

Ācāryadeva jokingly told him, "If you faithfully hear *Govinda-bhāṣya* for another few days, then you can become liberated from Ācārya Śaṅkara's *advaita* philosophy." Hearing this, Varadā Bābū laughingly agreed.

On the first day of *ūrjā-vrata* Śrīla Ācāryadeva instructed the audience as follows. "*Kārtika-vrata niyama-sevā* is a part of *cāturmāsya-vrata*. Fully mature *bhakti*, which is the fruit of observing *cāturmāsya-vrata*, will not develop if one only honours *ūrjā-vrata* and not the full four months. In fact, this negligence actually reveals disrespect for *cāturmāsya-vrata*. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His associates observed *cāturmāsya-vrata* with great conviction and devotion, and in this way they instructed *sādhakas* in the whole Vaiṣṇava community as to the means of attaining *bhakti*. Only those who do not generally accept difficulties in their performance of service to Śrī Hari or who are averse to renunciation will abandon *cāturmāsya-vrata* as a whole and have faith only in *kārtika-vrata*.

"What to speak of only observing *kārtika-vrata*, nowadays people in modern pseudo-devotional sects (*apasampradāyas*) do not even do that. Under the pretext of *dharma*, the purpose of life for such people is eating, sleeping and sexual enjoyment. The phrase from *śāstra*, *tapo-veśopajīvinaḥ*[18], refers to these kinds of people.

18 Editor: "Earning their living by shows of austerity and by dressing as mendicants" (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 12.3.38).

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They do not respect Śrīman Mahāprabhu's teaching in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Antya-līlā* 6.236), '*bhāla nā khāibe āra bhāla nā paribe* – do not eat very palatable food and do not dress opulently.' These people are counted among inferior and undisciplined *sampradāyas*, insofar as they also deviate from the glorious statement, '*mahāprabhura bhakta-gaṇera vairāgya pradhāna* – renunciation is the basic principle of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's devotees' (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Antya-līlā* 6.220).

"It is not that the observance of *cāturmāsya-vrata* is only meant for Vaiṣṇavas. It should be observed by the followers of every religion, and also by *karmīs*, *jñānīs*, *tapasvīs* and all other classes of people. Even the *sampradāyas* of Śaṅkara, the *smārtas* and others observe this *vrata*. All kinds of *sādhakas* have observed *kārtika-vrata* since ancient times, because it is a principal part of the *cāturmāsya-vrata*. Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti instructs and encourages their followers to observe this *vrata* fully. Those who are following Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti are well versed in this subject matter and will remember this even in the future."

Śrīla Prabhupāda's viraha-utsava in Chuṅchurā Maṭha

All the *maṭhas* under the jurisdiction of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti celebrated Śrīla Prabhupāda's disappearance day (*viraha-utsava*) lavishly in December 1959. With great faith it was celebrated in Śrī Dhāma Navadvīpa, Mathurā, Goloka-gañja and other *maṭhas*.

Paramārādhya Śrīla Ācāryadeva was personally present at Śrī Uddhāraṇa Gauḍīya Maṭha in Chuṅchurā, so the disappearance day was celebrated there with special devotion. After the lecture and *kīrtana*, the manager of the *maṭha*, *tridaṇḍi-svāmī* Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Mahārāja, strongly requested to the *maṭha* devotees and Śrī Samiti's initiated devotees to first offer *puṣpāñjali* at *paramārādhya* Śrīla Gurudeva's lotus feet and then at Śrīla Prabhupāda's lotus feet. After that, *āratī* of Śrīla Prabhupāda's picture (*paṭa-vigraha*) was performed with the *āratī-kīrtana* composed by Śrīla Gurupāda-padma. In the evening assembly Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Mahārāja read Śrīla Prabhupāda's collection of letters, essays and instructions from *Gauḍīya-patrikā*.

In his lecture, Śrīla Ācāryadeva gave very useful instructions. "Every year on this special day we place special emphasis on *hari-kathā*. Śrīla Prabhupāda Siddhānta Sarasvatī was *hari-kīrtana* personified. Those who had his association definitely experienced this. During his discourses it seemed as if he was speaking with thousands of mouths, not just one. We count twenty-four hours as one day, but in Śrīla Prabhupāda's *hari-kathā* one day would be converted into a thousand days. There are no words to describe the bliss he experienced when he spoke *bhagavad-kīrtana*. Generally people leave aside all other duties and become enraptured in mundane occupations, such as eating and sleeping, because that is the only time they feel happy. They do not understand that there are other, superior types of happiness. Śrīla Prabhupāda gave up eating and sleeping for engaging in *hari-kathā kīrtana*, because that is how he gained the greatest pleasure."

Śrīla Ācāryadeva discussed various topics in specific connection with Prabhupāda's teachings. He talked about ignorance and *māyā* and about ancient and modern views on impersonalism. He pointed out that history and the Ultimate Truth

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(*tattva-vastu*) are not the same, and discussed Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's contribution to the living entities' welfare. He also talked about the difference between various philosophical views, the oneness of *para-tattva* and so forth. In addition to this he expressed deep thoughts, full of profound truths, on the three features of *para-tattva – brahma*, Paramātmā and Bhagavān. He showed that only theism (*īśvara-vāda*) can control *māyā*, and he also spoke about the inconceivable, all-powerful Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Svayam Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa's inconceivable pastimes, the eternality of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, the *jīvas'* eternality and other subject matters.

Sixty-two lectures of Śrī Ācārya Kesarī in sixty-six days

On 19 April 1960, Śrīla Ācārya Kesarī went with a preaching party and visited about thirty villages in Medinīpura and Caubīsa Paraganā, where he promoted *sanātana-dharma* with great vigour. With the power of a lion, he delivered brilliant lectures at sixty-two religious assemblies in sixty-six days. *Sanātana-dharma* started to blow like a strong whirlwind wherever he addressed the religious assemblies. Thousands of people assembled to hear his lectures. In some places as many as fifteen or twenty thousand people came and listened to his speeches and became transfixed, not moving or talking for two hours. At times the audience asked questions, which Ācārya Kesarī answered on the strength of śāstric evidence and irrefutable logic. This dialogue increased the audience's curiosity and eagerness. Not only those who asked the questions but also the entire audience became ecstatic when they heard Śrīla Gurudeva's answers. Everyone was impatient to touch the dust of Śrīla Ācāryadeva's lotus feet at the end of the assembly, and even after he returned to his residence, a crowd from the audience gathered there as well. Nearby villages appealed to Ācārya Kesarī to hold religious gatherings in their places also, but it was not possible to go everywhere. Śrīla Saccidānanda Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's disappearance day was on 24 June and Śrī Jagannātha-deva's *ratha-yātrā* would begin on another day. Consequently, Śrīla Ācārya Kesarī was obliged to return to Śrī Uddhāraṇa Gauḍīya Maṭha, Chuṅchurā, together with the preaching party.

Ācārya Kesarī's daily preaching schedule during this time:

(1) 19 April 1960, Tuesday, in the courtyard of Śrī Yogendra-nātha Sāmanta dāsa's home in Keśavapura Jalpāī village (Medinīpura): 'Who is called a human being?'

(2) 20 April, in the courtyard of Śrī Ayodhyānātha dāsa's home in the same village: 'Vaiṣṇava etiquette and the symptoms of *bhakti*'.

(3) 21 April, in the courtyard of Śrī Bhuvana-mohana Jānā's home in Āktalā village: '*Sanātana-dharma*'.

(4) 22 April, at the same place: 'The duty of human life'.

(5) 23 April, in the courtyard of Śrī Aruṇa-candra dāsa's home in the same village: 'The solution to various problems'.

(6) 24 April, in the Durga Maṇḍapa of Śrī Jānakīnātha Mandira in Nandīgrāma: 'The solution to various problems'.

(7) 25 April, in the field of Śrī Vraja-mohana Tivārī Śikṣā-niketan in the same village: 'The necessity of religion'.

(8) 26 April, in the courtyard of Śrī Sītāprakāśa dāsa Adhikārī's home in Bheṭuriyā village: 'The difference between service to the living entity and service to the Supreme Lord'.

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(9) 27 April, in the huge courtyard of Kodāmvāḍī High School from 9–11 a.m.: 'The necessity for religion'.

(10) 27 April, in the courtyard of Śrī Nanī-gopāla dāsa Adhikārī's home in Bheṭuriyā village, from 8.30–10.30 p.m.: 'Humanity of mankind'.

(11) 28 April, at the same place: '*Sanātana-dharma*'.

(12) 29 April, at the huge field of Śrī Gagancandra Hājrā Higher Secondary School in Sāivāḍī village: 'Śrī Caitanyadeva and the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya*'.

(13) 30 April, at the same place: 'The duty of human life'.

(14) 2 May, in the field of Vegunāvāḍī Junior High School in Pūrvacaka village: 'The duty of human life'.

(15) 3 May, in the courtyard of Śrī Giridhārī dāsa Adhikārī's home in Pūrvacaka village: 'The difference between Vaiṣṇava philosophy and Śaṅkara's philosophy'.

(16) 4 May, in the huge courtyard of the local Śiva temple in Mohāṭī village, at the request of *bhakta* Śaśībhūṣaṇa Bhuṣā: 'The duty of human life'.

(17) 5 May, in the field of the high school in Simuliyā village: '*Sanātana-dharma*'.

(18) 6 May, at the same place, at 9 a.m.: 'The necessity of religion in student life'.

(19) 6 May, at the same place at 8 p.m.: 'The superiority of *vaiṣṇava-dharma*'.

(20) 7 May, in the courtyard of Śrī Hare-kṛṣṇa dāsa Adhikārī's home in Eḍāśāla village: 'Pure (*śuddhā*) and mixed (*biddhā*) *ekādaśī-tattva*'.

(21) 8 May, at the same place: 'Is Vaiṣṇavism a caste or a religion?'

(22) 9 May, in the courtyard of Śrī Jitajñāna dāsa Adhikārī's home in the same village: 'What is the living entity's *dharma*?'

(23) 10 May, in the courtyard of Śrī Ṭhākura temple in Kulavāḍī village: 'What is humanity?'

(24) 12 May, in the courtyard of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti's Śrī Pichladā *pāda-pīṭha* in Pichladā village: 'The purpose of human life'.

(25) 13 May, at Pichladā Gauḍīya Maṭha: 'Disciplic succession (the bona fide *sampradāya*) vs. a mix of everything (all paths are the same)'.

(26) 14 May, in the courtyard of the local primary school in Nar-Cākanāna village, at the request of *bhakta* Hārādhana: 'The speciality of Śrī Caitanyadeva's great contribution'.

(27) 15 May, at Terpekhyā Bāzār: 'The subject established in Vedānta'.

(28) 16 May, at the same place: 'The subject established in Vedānta'.

(29) 17 May, at the same place: *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* lecture.

(30) 19 May, in the courtyard of Śrī Mandira in Kalyāṇpura village: 'The necessity of religious life'.

(31) 20 May, at the same place: 'Solutions to problems of the present time'.

(32) 21 May, in Śrī Madana-mohana Gauḍīya Maṭha in Kalyāṇpura village: '*Vaiṣṇava-dharma*'.

(33) 22 May, in the courtyard of Śrī Revatī-bhūṣaṇa Pāl's home in Maluvāsāna village: '*Śrī nāma-tattva*'.

(34) 23 May, in the courtyard of Śrī Harināma Pracāriṇī Sabhā in the city of Tamaluka: '*Śrī nāma-tattva*'.

(35) 24 May, at the same place: '*Sanātana-dharma*'.

(36) 25 May, at the same place: 'The subject established in Vedānta'.

(37) 26 May, at the same place: Śrīla Gurudeva read from and commented on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

(38) 28 May, in the school ground in Cakagāḍupotā village: '*Sanātana-dharma* and the worship of demigods and demigoddesses'.

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(39) 29 May, at the same place: '*Pañca-rasa-tattva*, the five mellows, and *Bhāgavatam*'. On this occasion there were arguments with people from the Ārya Samāja concerning *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, but they left speechless when they heard Śrīla Ācārya Kesarī's irrefutable logic and scriptural evidence.

(40) 30 May, in the courtyard of Śrī Narendra Paḍuā's home in the same village: 'Proper Vaiṣṇava conduct'.

(41) 31 May, at the same place: 'The problems of the present age'. Here on behalf of the audience the question was raised whether or not Vaiṣṇavas can engage in agriculture. Śrīla Ācārya Kesarī gave scriptural evidence and examples that Vaiṣṇavas can do so. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* mentions this in the section describing *varṇāśrama-dharma*. During Śrī Kṛṣṇa's time there were two categories of the *gopa* community: *gopas* engaged in cow grazing and *gopas* engaged in agriculture; both are Vaiṣṇavas. During Śrīman Mahāprabhu's time, too, there were many *gṛhastha* Vaiṣṇavas engaged in agriculture. The audience was very satisfied to receive such a good reply.

(42) 2 June, in the courtyard of Śailendranātha Ghoṣa's home in Daimond Harbour (in Caubīs Parganā district): Śrīla Ācāryadeva read from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

(43) 3 June, in the courtyard of Śrī Viśālākṣmī Mandira in Kākadvīpa: '*Sanātana-dharma*'.

(44) 4 June, at the same place: 'The duty and *dharma* of human life'.

(45) 6 June, at the local Hari-sabhā: '*Sanātana-dharma*'.

(46) 7 June, in Kāśīnagara Bāzār: 'The duty of human life'.

(47) 8 June, at the same place: '*Sanātana-dharma*'.

(48) 9 June, in Gilārchaṭa village: '*Vaiṣṇava-dharma*'.

(49) 10 June, at the same place: '*Śrī nāma-tattva*'.

(50) 11 June, in Kāśīnagara Bāzār: 'Vaiṣṇava etiquette and eternal *dharma*'.

(51) 12 June, on the college ground in Kṛṣṇa-candrapura village: '*Jīva-tattva* and how the living being can become qualified to serve the Supreme Lord'.

(52) 13 June, in the courtyard of Śrī Dvijottama dāsa Adhikārī's home in Sarveḍiyā village: '*Adhokṣaja-tattva* (the transcendental reality)'.

(53) 15 June, in the courtyard of the primary school in Ektārā village: 'The duty of human life'.

(54) 16 June, at the same place: '*Sanātana-dharma*'.

(55) 17 June, in the Hari-sabhā Bhavana in Hadugañja village: 'The duty of human life and *vaiṣṇava-dharma*'.

(56) 18 June, in the courtyard of Śrī Vasanta Kumāra Ghoṣa's home in Cāndanagara village: '*Śrī nāma-tattva*'.

(57) 19 June, in the courtyard of Śrī Nīlamaṇi Ghoṣa's home in the same village: Śrīla Gurudeva read 'The conversation between Nimi and the Nava-yogendras' from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

(58) 20 June, in the courtyard of Śrī Kṛṣṇapāda Ghoṣa's home in the same village: Śrīla Gurudeva read from the same part of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

(59) 20 June, in the courtyard of Śrī Rajanīkānta Ghoṣa's home in the same village at 8 p.m.: Śrīla Ācāryadeva read from the same part of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* again.

(60) 21 June, in the courtyard of the Court in Daimond Harbour: '*Sanātana-dharma*'.

(61) 22 June, at the same place: '*Sanātana-dharma*'.

(62) 23 June, at the same place: Śrīla Gurudeva read from the Eleventh Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

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Śrīla Ācāryadeva in Murśidābāda

On 23 December 1960, *paramārādhya* Śrīla Gurudeva arrived with his associates at Howrah Baharampura city in the district of Murśidābāda, having received a special invitation from the distinguished residents of that city. Śrīla Gurudeva's childhood friend Śrī Kṛṣṇadeva Mukhopadhyāya and many local people were anxiously waiting to welcome him at the Baharampura Court Station. When he arrived they enthusiastically greeted him with garlands, sandalwood and other paraphernalia, and then brought him and his party by car to Śrī Haripada Sāhā's temple in the city of Howrah, where he was to stay.

The next evening, Śrīla Ācāryadeva gave a powerful lecture on the duty of human life to a huge congregation in the large courtyard of the temple. On the third day, 25 December, Śrīla Ācāryadeva delivered another profound lecture at the same place. The subject was 'The original nature of *vaiṣṇava-dharma*'. Lawyers, teachers and other educated people of the city were fascinated by his lecture, which was replete with the truths of Vedānta. On the special request of these people, Śrīla Ācāryadeva extended his stay for three days and spoke on *mukti-tattva* and *acintya-bhedābheda*, analyzing very deep philosophical principles. The general public became enchanted when they heard his powerful discourses. At the end of the program, Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Trivikrama Mahārāja gave a lecture cum slide show on *śrī gaura-kṛṣṇa-līlā*.

After preaching *śuddha-bhakti* for five days in Howrah Baharampura, Śrīla Ācāryadeva accepted the special invitation of the respected Rāya Bahādura Surendra Nārāyaṇa Singh, a very religious and learned person, and went to Jiyāgañja with his preaching party. On the first day, Rāya Bahādura organized a large religious assembly in the extensive courtyard of the local Caṇḍī-maṇḍapa. At his special request Śrīla Ācāryadeva gave a lecture full of deep truths regarding the philosophy of *acintya-bhedābheda*.

He said, "*Para-brahma* Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of all lords, who creates all the material universes, is *advaya-jñāna para-tattva*, the non-dual Supreme Absolute Truth. He is the unparalleled Truth. He is not formless (*nirākāra*), without power (*niḥśaktik*) and without attributes (*nirviśeṣa*); rather, He is the inconceivable possessor of all energies (*sarva-śaktimān*). Actually, the Supreme Absolute Truth, Śrī Bhagavān, has one *śakti*, which is called *parā-śakti* or *antaraṅga-śakti*. However, this *parā-śakti* is known by different names because it performs many kinds of functions. Amongst these names, three are principal, namely *cit-śakti, jīva-śakti* and *māyā-śakti*. The spiritual world manifests from *cit-śakti*, innumerable living entities from *jīva-śakti* (also called *taṭasthā-śakti*), and innumerable material worlds from *māyā-śakti* (also called *bahiraṅgā-śakti*). When we say 'manifest' it is to be understood to mean the transformation of the different *śaktis*, or energies, of the Lord.

"The *śaktis* of *para-tattva* (the Absolute Truth) are simultaneously one with and different from the transformations of those same *śaktis*, but this oneness and difference is beyond the petty reasoning, logic and comprehension of the *jīvas*. In this sense, it is inconceivable. At the same time, it is conceivable or accessible through the medium of transcendental sound. Therefore, this oneness (*bheda*) and difference (*abheda*) is called *acintya-bhedābheda*.

"Now, what do we mean when we say that it is accessible through the medium of transcendental sound? This should be understood very carefully. When we say 'transcendental sound', we mean

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> "When we say 'transcendental sound', we mean the words of the scriptures ... which are accepted by the genuine *guru-paramparā*. This specific relationship of simultaneous oneness and difference (*bheda* and *abheda*) can be understood only by the authority of this transcendental sound; otherwise it remains inconceivable."

the words of the scriptures such as the Vedas, the Upaniṣads, *Vedānta-sūtra*, the Purāṇas, *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Mahābhārata* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, which are accepted by the genuine *guru-paramparā*. This specific relationship of simultaneous oneness and difference (*bheda* and *abheda*) can be understood only by the authority of this transcendental sound; otherwise it remains inconceivable. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu taught this *acintya-bhedābheda-tattva* to Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya, and it has been very thoroughly discussed by Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī in the Ṣaṭ-sandharbhas and by *gauḍīya vedāntācārya* Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa in his *Govinda-bhāṣya*."

This lecture was so full of very deep philosophical thoughts that even learned and educated people – what to speak of the general audience – could not understand it easily. They all told Śrī Ācārya Kesarī that, since the lecture had been so difficult to understand, they wanted to hear a simple and easy talk about the duty of human life. Śrīla Gurudeva therefore spoke the following day on '*Dharma* and the duties of human life'. He refuted the views of the modern *apasampradāyas* and *upasampradāyas* and extensively discussed pure *sanātana-dharma*, *bhagavad-bhakti*. Every day after Śrīla Gurudeva's lectures, *tridaṇḍi-svāmī* Bhaktivedānta Trivikrama Mahārāja gave a lecture, with the help of slides, on Śrīman Mahāprabhu's teachings. Prayers were also offered to Śrī Hari, Guru and Vaiṣṇavas at the beginning and end of the lecture every day, and the songs of the *mahājanas* (spiritual authorities) and the *harināma mahā-mantra* were sung.

Preaching of śuddha-bhakti in Sundaravana (Bengal)

On 24 January 1961, on the special invitation of the Dharma Sammelana, Śrī Ācāryadeva arrived at Rājanagara near Kākadvīpa, along with his associates. Among them was *tridaṇḍi-svāmī* Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja [the author], the editor of the Hindi *Śrī Bhagavat-patrikā*, published in Śrī Dhāma Mathurā.

For the evening, a very large religious conference was organized in the extensive courtyard of Rājanagara High School, and Śrīla Ācāryadeva was unanimously selected as chairman. Speakers from other *sampradāyas* gave lectures, after which Śrīla Ācāryadeva called upon *tridaṇḍipāda* Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja and Śrī Cidghanānanda Brahmacārī, who were the chief guests of the assembly and in favour of *vaiṣṇava-dharma*, to speak. Finally, Śrīla Ācāryadeva gave a very interesting lecture on the difference between Bhagavān Kapila and the *sāṅkhya* philosopher Kapila, who appeared later. He asserted that Hindus are the only followers of *sākāra-vāda* (the principle substantiating Bhagavān's form), whereas all non-Hindus are impersonalists (*nirākāra-vādīs*).

Śrīla Ācāryadeva explained that Kapiladeva Ṛṣi is the original founder of *sāṅkhya* philosophy.

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There are two Kapilas. The first Kapila appeared in Satya-yuga as the son of Maharṣi Kardama and Manu's daughter Devahuti. He is an incarnation of Bhagavān and is famous for being the founder of *sāṅkhya* philosophy. Although he did not compose the book named *Sāṅkhya-darśana*, the doctrine of *sāṅkhya* that he established is very clearly found in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and other scriptures. It was the second Kapila Muni (who destroyed the dynasty of Sagara) and who appeared in Treta-yuga who composed the book *Sāṅkhya-darśana*. Even though this *Sāṅkhya-darśana* is a compilation of the essence of the original Kapiladeva's philosophy of *sāṅkhya* and contains excellent explanations of *ātma-tattva*, the reality of the soul, it contains some specific features that are completely against the conclusion of the Śrutis. (For instance, Kapila Muni says that Īśvara is incomplete, and that the non-sentient material nature, *prakṛti*, is the original creator of the material world.) According to *vedānta-śāstra* this is against the opinions of Śrutis, and therefore, the society of *sādhus* have no respect for the modern *Sāṅkhya-darśana*.

There is no mention of the word 'Hindu' in the ancient scriptures, yet all the followers of *sanātana-dharma* are to be understood as Hindus. All Hindus accept that Bhagavān has a form (*sākāra-vāda*), and they worship the transcendental deity of the Lord. Christians, Buddhists, Muslims, Jains and followers of religions other than Hinduism all believe in a formless Absolute (*nirākāra-vāda*). The followers of *sanātana-dharma* are followers of eternal *dharma*. All religions other than this *sanātana-dharma* have a beginning and an end. Even though their followers do formally believe that God has no form, they are forced to accept a form or shape in one aspect or another. Their scriptures also contain descriptions of God, such as the shape and form of Khudā. In the Buddhist and Jain temples huge deities are worshipped. If Īśvara has no form, then what is the need of temples, mosques, churches and Buddhist stupas? For whom are they required? If there is no form and nobody actually exists, then for whom are the temples and mosques intended?

Ācāryadeva was also elected chairman on the second day of the religious conference. After members of other *sampradāyas* had spoken, Śrīla Ācāryadeva instructed me [the author] to lecture on the Absolute Truth (*para-tattva*), the identity of the worshipful object (*upāsya-vastu*) and worship of Him. I established that Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa is solely *advaya-jñāna para-tattva*, the Supreme Absolute Truth who is beyond all dualities. In support of this, I presented scriptural evidence such as *ete cāṁśa-kalāḥ puṁsaḥ kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam* (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.3.28), *īśvaraḥ paramaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ / anādir ādir govindaḥ sarva-kāraṇa-kāraṇam* (*Brahma-saṁhita* 5.1), and *ārādhyo bhagavān vrajeśa-tanayas-tad-dhāma vṛndāvana ... naḥ paraḥ*. I also strongly emphasized Śrīman Mahāprabhu's opinion that the topmost aim for the living beings is to attain *śrī kṛṣṇa-prema* and that the highest worship of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is that of the *vraja-ramaṇīs*.

After that, Śrī Viśvanātha Rāya, Śrī Sudarśana Brahmacārī and Śrī Cidghanānanda Brahmacārī spoke about *vaiṣṇava-dharma*. At the end, Śrīla Ācāryadeva nicely explained to the whole audience that the *vaiṣṇava-dharma* established by Caitanya Mahāprabhu is actually *sanātana-dharma*.

The organizers of the conference, especially the teacher Surendranātha Bhaṭṭācārya (MA triple) and Śrī Dvijendranātha Pātra Mahodaya, highly praised Śrī Ācāryadeva's style of lecturing, his mood and his thought. At the end of the conference they discussed *dharma* with Śrīla Guru Mahārāja.

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Śrī vyāsa-pūjā celebration in Chuṅchurā Maṭha

On 3–6 February 1961, *śrī vyāsa-pūjā* celebrations were held in all the *maṭhas* of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti for four days. The celebration at Śrī Uddhāraṇa Gauḍīya Maṭha was especially successful because of Śrīla Ācāryadeva's personal presence there.

The appearance day of Śrīla Ācāryadeva was on Māghī-kṛṣṇā-tṛtīyā (3 February), and prayers and *kīrtana* glorifying Śrī Hari, Guru and Vaiṣṇavas were performed from *brāhma-muhūrta*, very early morning. After that, *pūjā* of *guru-pañcaka*, *ācārya-pañcaka*, *vyāsa-pañcaka*, *kṛṣṇa-pañcaka*, *upāsya-pañcaka*, *pañca-tattva-pañcaka*, etc., and *vaiṣṇava-homa* (fire sacrifice) were performed according to *Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā-paddhati*. Śrīla Ācāryadeva very kindly arrived at the place of worship and all his *sannyāsī*, *brahmacārī* and *gṛhastha* followers offered their *śraddhā-puṣpāñjali* at his lotus feet. After the noon offering of *bhoga* and *āratī*, wonderful *mahā-prasāda* was distributed to all the guests, both invited and uninvited. At the religious assembly that evening, Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Muni Mahārāja, Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Paramārthī Mahārāja, Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Mahārāja and others lectured on *śrī guru-tattva*.

The next day, 4 February, the homages sent by the devotees from different places were read in the evening assembly. Finally, Śrīla Ācāryadeva gave special instructions on the need of taking shelter at the lotus feet of a bona fide *guru* (*sad-guru-padāśraya*) and the duties of the bona fide disciple (*sat-śiṣya*).

6 February was Govinda-pañcamī (Māghī-kṛṣṇā-pañcamī) and the appearance day of *jagad-guru* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda. Prayers and *kīrtana* were performed continuously from the early morning, and then *tridaṇḍi-svāmī* Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Mahārāja read Śrīla Prabhupāda's conceptions of *śrī vyāsa-pūjā*, from Prabhupāda's lectures. After the deities were given *arcana-pūjana* and Śrīla Prabhupāda was offered *puṣpāñjali*, *bhoga* was offered and at noon *āratī* was performed. Afterwards all the assembled guests were served *mahā-prasāda*.

That evening at five a large assembly was organized, at which the homages sent by devotees for Śrīla Ācāryadeva and Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda were read first. Śrī Cidghanānanda Brahmacārī spoke on Śrīla Prabhupāda's personality and instructions, after which *paramārādhya* Śrīla Gurudeva gave a very instructive and substantial lecture regarding the speciality of Śrīla Prabhupāda's teachings. He said that *śrī guru-pūjā* is also known as *vyāsa-pūjā*. *Gurus* are of two kinds: *dīkṣā-guru*, who first gives the *mantras*, and *śikṣa-guru*, who gives further instructions. Śrīla Vyāsadeva is giving instructions (*śikṣā*) and is therefore *śikṣā-guru*. In the *arcana* process, the rule is to worship the *dīkṣā-guru* first. According to *tattva*, the *śikṣā-guru* is non-different from the *dīkṣā-guru*. Furthermore, all scriptures declare that since they are the same, both are to be served. Both are manifestations of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Ādi-līlā* 1.45, 47) also states:

> *guru kṛṣṇa-rūpa hana śāstera pramāṇe*
> *guru-rūpe kṛṣṇa kṛpā karena bhakta-gaṇe*
>
> *śikṣā-guruke ta' jāni kṛṣṇera svarūpa*
> *antaryāmī, bhakta-śreṣṭha,—ei dui rūpa*

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> According to *śāstra*, the *guru* (*dīkṣā-guru*) is the form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa (*kṛṣṇa-rūpa*), because it is in the form of *guru*, that Kṛṣṇa bestows mercy on the devotees. One should know the *śikṣā-guru* to be Kṛṣṇa Himself (*kṛṣṇa-svarūpa*). In the form of the *guru* in the heart (*caitya-guru*) Kṛṣṇa gives encouragement, and as the topmost devotee He gives association and instruction.

In other scriptures, the following are accepted as *śikṣā-gurus*: the six Gosvāmīs, Gaurahari endowed with Śrī Rādhā's sentiments and bodily complexion, and Kṛṣṇa wearing a peacock-feather crown. Even then, it is the disciple's duty to worship the *dīkṣā-guru* first. The *guru* who gives the *mantras*, the *dīkṣā-guru*, has a prominent special feature. The transcendental sound vibration (*śabda-brahma*) which protects us from the mental platform is called *mantra*, and he who saves the disciple from the mental platform is called the *mantra*-giving *guru*. The *guru* who gives *mantras* is therefore the topmost, and should be worshipped first. Śrī Vedavyāsa imparts all kinds of instructions, and since he is *śikṣā-guru*, his importance or speciality is an unavoidable fact.

It is rare to find a bona fide *guru*, in this present time. Disputes are often seen among *dīkṣā-* and *śikṣā-gurus* because they are actually unqualified. Therefore the real *śikṣā-guru* is one who is non-envious, who gives instructions for *bhakti-sādhana*, and who instructs the disciple to serve the *dīkṣā-guru*. *Śāstras* say that one should give proper respect to him. One who does not teach the disciple to serve the *dīkṣā-guru* is not a real *śikṣā-guru*. In fact, a so-called *śikṣā-guru* who cannot honour the *dīkṣā-guru* is not a pure Vaiṣṇava. What kind of behaviour does such a preceptor demonstrate towards his own *dīkṣā-guru*? Those immersed in monism disrespect the *guru* or disseminate disrespect to the *guru* following Śrī Śaṅkara Ācārya's belief that the *guru* does not know theory fully (*anavagatasyāta*). They also consider the *guru* to be *aguru*, or insignificant. If the *guru* is ignorant or has not realized *tattva*, then how can the disciple respect his status? A qualified disciple does not think, "I shall get all types of benefits by performing *guru-sevā*. It will enable me to spend my life lazily and comfortably in the name of being *bhajanānandi*, one absorbed exclusively in *bhajana*, and I shall be able to lord it over other devotees." *Gurura sevaka haya mānya āpanāra.*[19] Devotees and disciples who have taken shelter of a *sad-guru* always give respect to all other servants of *guru*. Only one who teaches *guru-sevā* is *śikṣā-guru*.

In Valāgaḍa, a large conference was held to promote dharma

23–25 February 1961, Saccidānanda Sevāśrama of Valāgaḍa in the Hoogly district, organized an extensive three-day *dharma-sabhā*. *Oṁ viṣṇupāda* Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, the president-*ācārya* of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti, received a special invitation, and attended this great *dharmika* function along with his *sannyāsīs* and twenty *brahmacārīs*. The Sevāśrama had made very nice arrangements for the participants' lodging and *prasāda*.

The large conference started at four o'clock in the afternoon. Different speakers and guests arrived first, and then Śrīla Ācārya Kesarī was brought to the platform to the resounding of

19 Editor: This is a popular adaptation of *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā* 10.142 – *gurura kiṅkara haya mānya āpanāra.*

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conch shells and *saṅkīrtana*. He was respectfully seated as the chairman by the son of Sir Āśutoṣa Mukhopādhyāya (the first Indian governor of Bengal) and Śrī Vāmā Prasāda Mukherjī (the brother of Śyāmāpada Mukherjī), the retired chief justice of Kolkata High Court. Svāmī Samādhiprakāśa Araṇya and Śrī Jīva Nyāya-tīrtha were selected as the main guests. The speaker Mahāsthavīra Dharmakīrti, Śrīmatīlāla Dāsa (retired district judge), Śrī Sudhīndranātha Mukhopādhyāya, *sannyāsīs* of the Samiti, *brahmacārīs* and other distinguished persons took their seats and then the program started.

After the inaugural music of Śrī Jitendranātha Caudharī, Śrī Tārakagati Mustafī spoke about the aim of the conference on behalf of Svāmī Bhūpānanda Purī Mahārāja, the president of Saccidānanda Sevāśrama. After that, at the request of the chairman Śrīla Ācārya Kesarī, Dr. Motīlāla Dāsa lectured on *dharma*, presenting evidence from the Vedas and Upaniṣads. Later, Mahāsthavīra from the Mahābodhi Society spoke on moral behaviour (*dharma-nīti*) and the religious preaching of Buddhadeva. Śrī Jīva Nyāya-tīrtha spoke on 'The necessity of *dharma*' and Svāmī Samādhiprakāśa Araṇya Mahārāja followed with a wonderful lecture on 'The condition of the present religious world'.

Finally, Śrīla Ācāryadeva gave a very brilliant lecture, which the audience liked above all others. It was full of sentiments about the national leaders' lack of concern for *dharma*, the opposition to *dharma* in society, and the degrading influence of modern education on Indian culture. After 8 p.m. the secretary of the convention requested the chairman, Śrīla Ācāryadeva, to open and announce the exhibition arranged by the conference. However, the enthusiastic audience repeatedly requested Śrīla Ācāryadeva to continue his lecture. He did so and gave very impressive instructions on the theme 'Following *dharma* is the foremost duty of human life'. After the conference, the organizers and the audience lavishly praised Śrīla Ācāryadeva's views.

Preaching in Assam and Sundaravana

On 1 April 1961, upon the repeated and insistent request of the devotees in Assam, Śrīla Ācāryadeva came to preach *sanātana-dharma* (pure *vaiṣṇava-dharma*) very strongly for one month in Goloka-gañja Gauḍīya Maṭha, Caḍaīkholā, Ṭokre Chaḍā, Ḍiḍiṅgā, Dhūbaḍī, Śāntinagara and many other places. A large religious conference took place in the courtyard of the Ḍiḍiṅgā village Junior High



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School. Hindus, Muslims and Christians were all present in great numbers at this conference, and everybody praised Śrīla Ācāryadeva's views, which strongly appealed to the heart.

After returning from Assam, on 16 June, our most worshipful Śrīla Gurudeva travelled with some *sannyāsīs* and *brahmacārīs* to Sundaravana. The party preached *śuddha-bhakti* extensively in Kṛṣṇacandra-pura, Kāśīmgaṛha, Lakṣmī Janārdana-pura, Āīplaṭa and other places and returned to the Chuṅchurā *maṭha* on 24 June.

Ratha-yātrā and jhūlana-yātrā celebrations at Śrī Uddhāraṇa Gauḍīya Maṭha

On 12 July 1961, a special celebration of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's disappearance day took place at Śrī Uddhāraṇa Gauḍīya Maṭha in Chuṅchurā. Śrīla Ācāryadeva was the chairman, and there were many lectures on Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's transcendental life and on his teaching and practise of *vaiṣṇava-dharma*. Speakers included Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Mahārāja, Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Trivikrama Mahārāja, Śrīmad Viṣṇu-daivata Mahārāja and other principal *sannyāsīs*, as well as Śrī Hari Brahmacārī, Śrī Bhagavān dāsa Brahmacārī, Śrī Bhāgavata dāsa Brahmacārī, Śrī Gajendra-mokṣaṇa Brahmacārī, Śrī Vaṁśī-vadanānanda Brahmacārī, Śrī Cidghanānanda Brahmacārī, Śrī Yaduvara dāsa Adhikārī (MAVT), Śrī Jitākṛṣṇa dāsa Adhikārī and other Vaiṣṇavas. Śrīla Ācāryadeva concluded with very educational instructions on the same subject.

The next day began the ten-day *ratha-yātrā* festival, which was celebrated with great pomp. Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Trivikrama Mahārāja's great service on this occasion was most laudable.

Later on, in the month of Śrāvaṇa, a splendid celebration was organized for Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda's *jhūlana-yātrā* and Śrī Baladeva's appearance day (Pūrṇimā). Our most worshipful Śrīla Gurudeva disclosed some very deep *tattva* and secrets regarding the *līlās* on these occasions.

Parikramā of all the tīrthas in India under the guidance of Śrīla Gurudeva

The *parikramā* of all the sacred places in India, including three *dhāmas* and seven *purīs*, was successfully completed during Kārtika *niyama-sevā* of 1961, under the guidance of *parivrājakācārya oṁ viṣṇupāda aṣṭottara-śata* Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, and in his direct presence. One hundred and eighteen pilgrims joined Śrīla Gurudeva on this pilgrimage, including *sannyāsīs*, *brahmacārīs*, *vānaprasthīs* and *gṛhasthas*. On 3 October 1961, the two-month journey began from Howrah station, with devotees travelling in a reserved tourist railway coach.

First of all the pilgrims took *darśana* of Śrī Madana-mohanajī in Viṣṇupura. Once, when Viṣṇupura was attacked by its enemies, Madana-mohanajī chased them out Himself by firing a cannon. The pilgrims also took *darśana* of the cannon. Under Śrīla Gurudeva's guidance, the *parikramā* party proceeded on to Jagannātha Purī, where they had *darśana* of Śrī Jagannātha-deva, Ṭoṭā Gopīnātha, Śrīla Prabhupāda's place of appearance and *bhajana*, Gambhīrā, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura's place of *bhajana* and his *samādhi*, Guṇḍicā Mandira and other places. On 8 October, they climbed the nine hundred and

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Śrīla Ācāryadeva in South India

eighty-seven steps up a hill in Siṁhācalam, and received the good fortune of having *darśana* of Jiyaḍa-nṛsiṁhadeva. On 10 October, they had *darśana* of Pānā-nṛsiṁha and the next day they visited the Madras Gauḍīya Maṭha, Pārtha-sārathi temple and other noteworthy places. In Chennai (Madras) they changed from the Eastern Railway train to a Southern Railway train and the journey continued.

The party reached Pakṣī-tīrtha on 13 October and had *darśana* of Veda-girīśvara Mahādeva and Hara (Śiva) and Pārvatī, who come to this temple in the form of birds. On 14 October, the pilgrims took *darśana* of Śrī Vāsudeva and Śrī Naṭarāja in Cidambaram, and of Pārvatī-devī in the form of a peahen in Māyābharam, reaching Kumbhakoṇam the same night. Next day they visited Mokṣa-kuṇḍa, Kumbheśvaram, Śrī Rāja-gopala Cakrapāṇi and other sacred places in Kumbhakoṇam.

Śrīla Gurudeva narrated a story about Mokṣa-kuṇḍa, which is a very large, deep pond. The Pāṇḍavas came here during their exile, and while they were taking bath in this sacred place, Devarṣi Nārada arrived there. Nārada asked Bhīmasena, who was very proud of his strength, "Do you know what sacred place this is and what its glories are?" The very powerful Bhīmasena respectfully greeted Devarṣi Nārada and said, "O Devarṣi, we don't know much about this. Please tell us." Nāradajī said, "First take bath, and then I will tell you." After they had bathed, Nāradajī explained that the pond in which they had taken bath is situated in the skull of Kumbhakarṇa. Śrī Rāmacandra killed that great warrior and, throwing Kumbhakarṇa's skull to this place with his arrows, created this pond. Kumbhakarṇa's skull became purified by the touch of Śrī Rāmacandra's arrows, and anyone who takes bath in this pond attains the *dhāma* of Śrī Rāmacandra. When Bhīmasena heard this from Devarṣi Nārada, his pride in his strength vanished, and he fell down at Devarṣi's feet. This big city received its name Kumbhakarṇam, or Kumbhakoṇam, from the name of Kumbhakarṇa.

On 16 October, the pilgrims took *darśana* of Śrī Vṛhadeśvara Mahādeva in Tanjora in one of the largest temples of India. On the top of this extensive temple is a round, eighty ton stone carved with fine designs. Modern scientists and archaeologists wonder how such a large stone could have been placed at such height before the invention of modern cranes.

There is also another wonder here. Śrī Nandījī, Lord Śiva's carrier, has been carved out of a stone weighing twenty-five tons and sits in front of the door of the main temple, facing Śiva. The

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pilgrims were very happy to have *darśana* of the temple and Śrī Nandī. On 18 October, the pilgrims reached Dhanuṣkotī at the extreme southern point of India, where they took bath. They then visited Śrī Rāmeśvara, where they had *darśana* of the huge Śiva temple that Śrī Rāmacandra established. Nearby they visited a *mūrti* brought by Hanumān.

On 20 October, they visited the temple of Mīnākṣī-devī in Madurāi and the next day visited the deity of Kanyā-kumārī in Kanyā-kumārī. On 23 October, they took *darśana* of Śrī Raṅganāthajī in Śrī Raṅgam, where Śrīman Mahāprabhu observed *cāturmāsya-vrata*. This is considered the largest temple in India, with each wall accommodating a whole city. Śrī Yamunācārya and Śrī Rāmānujācārya lived in this famous temple and from here preached throughout India. Raṅganāthajī is present there as Śeṣaśāyī with Lakṣmījī. After having *darśana* of Viṣṇukāncī and Śivakāncī on 25 October, the party reached Anakoṇam Junction, where they changed the Southern Railway tourist coach for an Eastern Railway coach. Travelling from here the pilgrims had *darśana* of Tirupati Bālājī, which is the richest temple in South India, situated on the Tirumalaī Hills.

On 29 October in Nāsika Pañcavaṭī, the pilgrims took *darśana* of the place where Sūrpanakhā's nose was cut off, the place where Śrī Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa and Sītā stayed on the bank of the Godāvarī, and other places. On 31 October, they took *darśana* of Mumbā-devī in Mumbai. On 1 November in Broca, they had *darśana* of the place where Vāmanadeva begged from Balī Mahārāja. After that the pilgrims travelled to Prabhāsa, Sudāmāpurī, Veṇṭa-dvārakā, Gomatī-dvārakā, Ḍākorajī (Raṇachoḍajī), Ujjayanī, Śrī Nāthadvārā, Puṣkara and Sāvitrī. In Jaipura they took *darśana* of Śrī Rādhā-Govinda, Śrī Rādhā-Gopīnātha, Śrī Rādhā-Dāmodara, Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava and Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. They visited Galtā-gaddī and other places and finally reached Mathurā-dhāma.

Starting from Mathurā on 17 November, they had *darśana* of Gokula, Vṛndāvana, Govardhana, Rādhā-kuṇḍa, Varsānā, Nandagrāma and other places. Then they visited Indraprastha in Delhi, Bhadrakālī in Kurukṣetra, Haridvāra, Ṛṣikeśa and Lakṣmana-jhūlā, and after that they went to Naimiṣāraṇya, Ayodhyā, Kāśī Viśvanātha in Vārāṇasī and Gadādhara Pāda-padma in Gāyā. The *parikramā* party returned to Kolkata after the two-month journey.

Śrīla Ācāryadeva in Jaipura

On 4 January 1962, *paramārādhya* Śrīla Gurudeva came with his associates to the Samiti's branch *maṭha* in Mathurā. There he preached Śrīman Mahāprabhu's message extensively for a week. He then proceeded to Jaipura, the capital of Rājasthān, at the repeated request of some distinguished residents of that city. For a week he lectured in Hindi and English in different assemblies, associations and temples, speaking about the spotless *vaiṣṇava-dharma* and *sanātana-dharma* that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu had taught and practised. He explained very clearly to the general public that *śrī harināma-saṅkīrtana* is easy and simple, and is the only way to attain Bhagavān, especially in Kali-yuga.

A huge assembly was organized in the local Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa temple. The city's distinguished scholars and masters of literature attended, and Śrīla Gurudeva gave a brilliant lecture on *śrī nāma-tattva*. The famous Hindi scholars, Śrī Kamalākara Kamala and *paṇḍita* Śrī Kṛṣṇacandrajī (*kāvya-vyākaraṇa-tīrtha*,

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sāhityācārya) were greatly impressed by Śrīla Ācāryadeva's lecture. Even though both were initiated *ācāryas* in Śrī Vallabhācārya's *puṣṭi-mārga*, they came to hear *vaiṣṇava-tattva* from Śrīla Ācāryadeva. Śrīla Gurudeva told them that Śrī Vallabhācārya met Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu twice. The first time was in Aḍaila-grāma near Prayāga, and the second time was in Śrī Purī-dhāma. Śrī Vallabhācārya's son, Śrī Viṭṭhalādeva, had a close and affectionate friendship with Śrī Rūpa, Raghunātha and the other Gosvāmīs.

Both Śrī Kamalākara 'Kamala' and Śrī Kṛṣṇacandrajī maintained a connection with Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha throughout their life. They kept an affectionate friendship with me [the author], and their poems and essays were published in *Śrī Bhāgavata-patrikā*.

After preaching *vaiṣṇava-dharma* extensively like this for a month in Mathurā and Jaipura, Ācārya Kesarī returned to Śrī Uddhāraṇa Gauḍīya Maṭha, Chuṅchurā, on 9 February.

Establishing a Samiti preaching centre in Orissa

Bhadraka is a famous place within the Bāleśvara district in Orissa. Nearby, on the bank of the river Sālindī, is the sacred village Koranṭa, where the majority of the residents are highly educated and prominent governmental officials. In this village, there is a temple of Śrī Gopālajī whose priest was Śrī Lāla Mohana Mahāpātra. Unable to perform the temple *sevā*, he offered the temple and its adjoining agricultural land to the Samiti's president, Śrīla Ācāryadeva, and it was duly registered in the court. Śrīla Ācāryadeva named this new branch Śrī Gopālajī



Śrīla Ācāryadeva in Orissa

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Gauḍīya Preaching Centre. After some time Śrī Gopālajī was moved from inside the village to an extensive temple, which was constructed on a large piece of land on the main road. An assembly hall and residential quarters for the *sevakas* were also built. Śrī Gopālajī is now worshipped in this temple.

Koranṭa village is situated two-and-a-half miles north of Bhadraka town. Śrī Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura composed his famous *Śrī Kṛṣṇa-saṁhita* here while serving as sub-divisional officer (SDO) in Bhadraka. He has mentioned in his poetic work *Vijana-grāma*: "*kimvā nā rahili kena sālindīra kūle, yathāya pathika-gaṇa aśvatthera mule, kāṭāya ātapa-tāpa niścinta antare* – On the bank of Sālindī there is a pipal tree, under whose shade travellers get relief from the scorching heat of the sun." When the preaching centre was established there, Śrīla Ācāryadeva said, "We will reside in Śrī Gopālajī Gauḍīya Preaching Centre and have the good opportunity to remember Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's pure character and devotional instructions."

This *maṭha* is situated only two furlongs from Vāudapura station, the next station after Bhadraka railway station. The road for vehicles there is also very good. The atmosphere is very captivating. The Samiti offers its heartily thanks to Śrī Mahāpātra Mahāśaya and his family for establishing this preaching centre for the propagation of *śuddha-bhakti*.

Preaching śuddha-bhakti in Jaipura

On 29 August 1962, Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja arrived with some *brahmacārīs* at Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha in Mathurā, where they stayed for fifteen days. Local educated people came to hear Śrīla Ācāryadeva, as did several research scholars from the universities at Aligarha and Āgrā. All were very pleased to hear his philosophical conceptions. Śrīla Ācāryadeva had established an extensive library in Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha and from time to time these scholars borrowed books favourable for their research.

Paramārādhyatama Śrīla Ācāryadeva also gave lectures in the temple room (*nāṭya-mandira*) at Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha. When the Mathurāvāsīs heard his impressive philosophical conceptions on *śuddha-bhakti*, they gradually became his followers. *Tridaṇḍi-svāmī* Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja [the author], the manager of the *maṭha*, devoted himself to caring for *paramārādhyatama* Śrīla Gurupāda-padma and the *brahmacārīs* accompanying him.

On 4 September 1962, Śrīla Gurudeva arrived in Jaipura with his group of followers and stayed at the main office of the Jaipura Halvāī Samiti, at the special request of the president, Seṭha Somīlālajī. *Paṇḍita* Śrī Kṛṣṇacandra Śāstrī Mahodaya (*kavya-tīrtha, sāhitya-ratna*) organized an eminent assembly on the premises of his Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇajī temple on Śrī Rādhāṣṭamī evening. *Paramārādhya* Śrīla Gurudeva gave a Hindi lecture which was full of *siddhānta*, establishing the usefulness of *śabda-brahma*, transcendental sound, as compared to useless mundane sound. The Vedas establish that only *śrī harināma* is *śabda-brahma*. And in all Vedas and other scriptures the *sad-guru*, the expert who has realized Bhagavān, bestows the transcendental *śabda-brahma* in the pure ear of the *sat-śiṣya*. This *śabda-brahma* is not created by air interacting with the throat or palate. Rather,

ataḥ śrī-kṛṣṇa-nāmādi na bhaved grāhyam-indriyaiḥ
sevonmukhe hi jihvādau svayam eva sphuratyadaḥ

Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.2.232)

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The human material senses cannot perceive *śrī harināma* because it is a transcendental sound. It will appear by itself on the pure senses of the *sevon-mukha sādhaka*, the practitioner in whose heart the desire to serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa has arisen.

In *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.2.231) the nature of *śrī nāma* is described thus:

nāma cintāmaṇiḥ kṛṣṇaś-
caitanya-rasa-vigrahaḥ
pūrṇaḥ śuddho nitya-mukto
'bhinnatvān nāma-nāminoḥ

Śrī kṛṣṇa-nāma is a transcendental wish-fulfilling gem (*cintāmaṇi*), because *kṛṣṇa-nāma* (Kṛṣṇa's name) and *nāmī* (Kṛṣṇa Himself) are non-different. This name is the very form of transcendental mellows (*caitanya-rasa-svarūpa*). It is complete, beyond illusion and eternally liberated.

Sac-cid-ānanda rasa-maya tattva, the transcendental nectar-filled Truth, is non-dual, but this *advaya-tattva* has appeared in two forms, *vigraha* and *nāma*. Only through service to *śabda-brahma*, that is, through pure *nāma-saṅkīrtana*, can the living being be established in his real *svarūpa* and remain eternally devoted serving the Divine Couple.

Ordinary sound is that which appears as a result of air interacting with the throat, palate, teeth, etc. It is uttered by one who does not have the shelter of a bona fide *guru* or the guidance of transcendental literature. This ordinary sound cannot bring about any good fortune for the conditioned souls (*baddha-jīvas*). The genuine *śāstras* have profusely glorified *śabda-brahma*. Śrīla Ācāryadeva used *Vedānta-darśana* and other evidence to establish the speciality and super-excellence of *śabda-brahma*.

After that, the honourable head (*mahantajī*) of the famous Śrī Govindadeva temple in Jaipura organized a scholarly assembly there and Śrīla Gurudeva delivered a brilliant lecture on *śrī rādhā-tattva, śrī kṛṣṇa-tattva* and the astonishing nature of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Yugala's pastimes. The audience was very attracted to Śrīla Ācāryadeva's unprecedented śāstric and siddhāntic conceptions. They could understand something of the deep philosophy of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and the Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* in His line.

Gradually it became known throughout the whole of Jaipura that a Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *ācārya*, who was an erudite philosopher and most knowledgeable in *siddhānta*, was visiting the city from Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma. The current principal of Jaipura's Mahārājā Sanskrit College was *mahāmahopādhyāya* Śrī Candraśekhara Dvivedī Vyākaraṇa-ācārya (*sānkhya-yoga-vedānta-tīrtha*). He later accepted *sannyāsa* in the Śaṅkara *sampradāya* and was given the post of *śaṅkarācārya*, the person in charge of the *maṭha* in the Śaṅkara *sampradāya*, in Śrī Govardhana Maṭha in Purī. He very respectfully invited Śrīla Ācāryadeva to preside at a huge scholastic assembly that he organized at his college. The assembly was attended by various college professors, students and honourable and faithful citizens. In his erudite lecture Śrīla Ācāryadeva quoted evidence from the Vedas and other scriptures to establish Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa as *akṣara-brahma*, the imperishable Supreme Truth.

After that he spoke on 'The duty of human life'. He compared modern democracy – wherein everyone, whether intelligent or foolish, can vote, and also be elected minister – to Gaṇeśa, who is considered foolish because he does not know

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who his father is. Quoting *arūpavadeva tat-pradhānatvāt* and other aphorisms from *Vedānta-sūtra*, he refuted *nirākāra-vāda* and established the Lord as *sākāra*, having form. He also impressed his audience by revealing the conclusion that *bhakta* (the devotee) and Bhagavān exist eternally, being beyond the limit of time and place.

The honourable principal of the college praised Śrīla Ācāryadeva's Vedāntic viewpoints and thanked him profusely. He also advised the students and society at large to accept Śrīla Ācāryadeva's spiritual instructions. He said that he would like to organize a conference for all *sampradāyas*, which would facilitate a discussion comparing the Gauḍīya Vedānta commentary with other commentaries on Vedānta.

The Samiti gave special thanks to Seṭha Somīlālajī, Śrī Oṁprakāśa Vrajavāsī Sāhitya-ratna and Śrī Jagadīśa Prasādajī Guptā, the director of Lakṣmī Motor Company, for all the service rendered while Śrīla Ācāryadeva was preaching *śuddha-bhakti* in Jaipura.

Śrīla Ācāryadeva's auspicious desire for Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Catuṣpāṭhī

In 1957, Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti established a Sanskrit school called Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Catuṣpāṭhī in Bospāḍā Lane, Bāgbāzār, Kolkata. Modern universities do not attach proper significance to the Sanskrit language, and as a result, students are not learning it. If such an ignorant attitude towards Sanskrit (*deva-bhāṣā*, the language of the gods) persists, the *bhagavat* ideology, which is the life of Indian culture, will undoubtedly soon disappear.

The Bengali language has been respected as pre-eminent among all languages in India, because its literature is derived from Sanskrit literature exclusively. Unfortunately, nowadays, Bengali is becoming disconnected from its relationship with Sanskrit. The present atheistic society in Bengal wants to eradicate Hindu *dharma*, but they know very well that Hindu *dharma* cannot be destroyed while Bengali is connected to Sanskrit. Therefore the managers of the modern universities want to make Bengali a *rāvindrīya-karaṇa* language (i.e. a language as simple as that used by Rāvindra Tagore), by separating Bengali from Sanskrit literature and grammar. In this way, by removing the combined letters [typical of Sanskrit], which are difficult to read, a very simple language is created, but it is a common man's language and low-class. One should understand that this is disrespectful of Sanskrit and ignorant of the line of thought presented in India's Vedas, Upaniṣads, Purāṇas and other traditional, spiritual teachings.

The devotees of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti reflected for a long time on this deplorable situation in Bengal, and indeed in the whole of India. To disseminate Sanskrit education they established the Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Catuṣpāṭhī in Chuṅchurā. Later this was transferred to Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha in Śrī Dhāma Navadvīpa. Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti formed a committee to satisfactorily manage the *catuṣpāṭhī*[20]. The committee members are as follows:

(1) Chairman: *oṁ viṣṇupāda paramahaṁsa-svāmī parivrājakācārya-varya* Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī
(2) Secretary: *tridaṇḍi-svāmī* Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Mahārāja

20 Editor: a school for teaching Sanskrit, particularly the four Vedas or grammar, along with poetry, laws and philosophy

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(3) Member: *tridaṇḍi-svāmī* Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Trivikrama Mahārāja
(4) Member: *tridaṇḍi-svāmī* Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja [the author]
(5) Member: Śrīyuta Śacīndra Mohananandī (chairman of the Navadvīpa City Council)
(6) Member: Śrīyuta Jitendranātha (*paṅca-tīrtha*)
(7) Member: *paṇḍita* Śrī Nimāi Caraṇa (*vyākaraṇa-tīrtha*)
(8) Member: *paṇḍita* Śrīyuta Sureśacandra Rāya (*vyākaraṇa-tīrtha*)
(9) Member: *paṇḍita* Śrī Vrajānanda Vrajavāsī

In previous years, many *catuṣpāṭhī* students passed the examination of the Bengal Sanskrit Literature Association (Baṅgīya Sanskṛta Sāhitya Pariṣad) with great distinction. This year, 1963, the honourable Śrī Jitendranātha Paṅca-tīrtha (*kāvya-vyākaraṇa-purāṇa-vedānta-vaiṣṇava-darśana-tīrtha*) is managing the Catuṣpāṭhī very earnestly and enthusiastically. In a short time, Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Catuṣpāṭhī has become glorious throughout Navadvīpa.

This year, a new teacher, *paṇḍita* Nimāi Caraṇa Vyākaraṇa-tīrtha Mahāśaya, has been appointed because the number of students has increased. The students read and study poetry (*kāvya*), grammar (*vyākaraṇa*) and Vedānta, and this year, seven of them have taken examinations at primary, medium and degree level. We respectfully offer Sanskrit students an education by qualified teachers in this exemplary *catuṣpāṭhī*. I am also humbly informing you that this Sanskrit school particularly emphasizes classes in *Śrī Harināmāmṛta-vyākaraṇa*. Facility for boarding and lodging is also available for students of *Śrī Harināmāmṛta-vyākaraṇa*. Such students may send their application forms together with their credentials to the secretary of the *catuṣpāṭhī*, *tridaṇḍi-svāmī* Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Mahārāja.

The opinion of the Sanskrit school supervisor regarding Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Catuṣpāṭhī

"The inspection of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Catuṣpāṭhī took place today. Two teachers, the secretary and ten students were present. Currently there are twelve students enrolled in the *catuṣpāṭhī*, which teaches poetry (*kāvya*, the Gosvāmī's writings), *Śrī Harināmāmṛta-vyākaraṇa* (Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī's book teaching Sanskrit grammar), Vedānta, *vaiṣṇava-darśana* and other *śāstras*. The respected principal is a *paṅca-tīrtha* (master of these five subjects), and a very diligent teacher. An assistant teacher has been appointed because the number of students has increased.

"According to the register, the *catuṣpāṭhī* has twelve or thirteen resident students. This is something to be happy about and proud of. The managing committee applied for government approval a long time ago, but to this day, approval has not been given.

"The *catuṣpāṭhī's* examination result is not lower than the previous year's, and the records are being accurately kept as before. I wish this *catuṣpāṭhī* all prosperity and progress."

(Signed)
Śrī Nalinī-kānta
(*tarkasmṛti-tīrtha*),
(additional) inspector of West Bengal Sanskrit school system
19 December 1963

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Establishment of Śrī Gauḍīya Charity Clinic

On 15 December 1962, the Śrī Gauḍīya Charity Clinic was established at Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha, Navadvīpa, to provide homeopathic, biochemic and allopathic treatment. A sub-committee was formed to manage the clinic, which is under the supervision of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti.

The selected members of the committee were as follows:

(1) Chairman: *oṁ viṣṇupāda paramahaṁsa-svāmī parivrājakācārya* Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī
(2) *Tridaṇḍi-svāmī* Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Mahārāja
(3) *Tridaṇḍi-svāmī* Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Trivikrama Mahārāja
(4) *Tridaṇḍi-svāmī* Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja [the author]
(5) *Tridaṇḍi-svāmī* Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Harijana Mahārāja
(6) *Tridaṇḍi-svāmī* Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Viṣṇu-daivata Mahārāja
(7) Sectretary: Śrīyuta Vrajānanda dāsa Vrajavāsī (LMF) (Regd. No. 8134 Cal.)
(8) Śrīyuta Advaita dāsa Vrajavāsī
(9) Śrī Gauḍīya Charity Clinic's doctor: Śrī Kṛṣṇabandhu Bhaumika (HMBHTC)

At the inauguration of the Charity Clinic, *paramārādhyatama* Śrīla Gurudeva was selected chairman. He requested the secretary of the sub-committee, Dr. Śrīyuta Vrajānanda Vrajavāsī (LMF), to read the article *Gauḍīya Clinic*, after



Śrī Gauḍīya Charity Clinic

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which Śrīla Gurudeva gave an attractive lecture full of deep thoughts about this clinic.

Śrīla Ācāryadeva said, "The Śrī Gauḍīya Charity Clinic is not the same as the clinics of the Rāmakṛṣṇa Mission and the Bhārata Sevāśrama Association. It may look the same from the external point of view of distributing medicine to patients, but there is a tremendous difference in the purpose. If we endeavour to give material help and sympathy to human beings, it will cause their bondage. Contrary to this, if we provide aide to the *jīvas* for their progress in *bhagavat-bhajana*, this will remove their material bondage and help them to enter the spiritual realm. We are very happy to point out that this Charity Clinic has quickly become very famous throughout Navadvīpa. Every day many patients come from far away to be treated by our qualified and skilled doctors."

Installation festival of the deities in the new temple during Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma parikramā and Śrī Gaura-janmotsava

In March 1963, Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti organized the extensive celebration of Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma *parikramā* and Śrī Gaura-janmotsava. On the third day of the *parikramā* (7 March), the atmosphere of the entire *maṭha* was filled with unprecedented joy, because of the inauguration of the temple and the installation of the deities. The *nāṭya-mandira* (the temple room) and especially the deities' altar were beautifully decorated with flower garlands, festoons of mango leaves and flowers, and trunks of banana trees. There was no *parikramā* that day, and during *brāhma-muhūrta* the day's auspicious ceremony was heralded by *maṅgala-āratī*, *saṅkīrtana*, an instrumental band and the sweet sound of the *sehnai*.

When Śrīla Ācāryadeva himself was ready with a water pot in his hands to bring water from the Bhagavatī Bhāgīrathī for the installation and *abhiṣeka*, the *maṭha sannyāsīs*, *brahmacārīs* and thousands of devoted pilgrims also assembled with their water pots. The procession made its way to the holy bank of the Bhagavatī Bhāgīrathī with a band playing in the front, followed by the *maṭha* devotees' *saṅkīrtana* group, then *paramārādhya* Śrīla Gurudeva with the water pot on his head, and finally thousands of devoted pilgrims performing *kīrtana* with great joy. The devotees worshipped Śrī Jāhnavī-devī (Gaṅgā) with sixteen articles. They then filled up their water pots with sacred Gaṅgā water and returned in the same manner they came, to the *maṭha* premises and the *yajña* altar.

Śrīla Ācāryadeva requested *tridaṇḍi-svāmī* Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Bhūdeva Śrautī Mahārājajī to officiate at this ceremony, with the help of *tridaṇḍi-svāmī* Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja [the author]. Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Trivikrama Mahārāja arranged for the deity installation and Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Mahārāja looked after the main guests.

The deities were placed on the bathing platform. First of all, They were bathed with milk, yoghurt, ghee, honey and sugar sanctified by *mantras*. After that, Their *abhiṣeka* was performed with one hundred and eight pots containing fragrant water from all the *tīrthas*, water flavoured from herbs (*sarvauṣadhi*), water flavoured from jewels, etc. During the *abhiṣeka*, Vedic scholars recited the *Puruṣa-sūkta*. Around the altar, Śrīmad Bhakti Jīvana Janārdana Mahārāja and other prominent *sannyāsīs* melodiously recited different *dharma-śāstras*, such as Veda-chatuṣṭya (the four Vedas), Upaniṣads, *Vedānta-darśana* (*Govinda-bhāṣya*), *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Gītā*, *Viṣṇu-sahasra-nāma*

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and *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. In addition, the sounds of *mahā-saṅkīrtana*, conch shells and the ladies' ululating resounded throughout the sky. Nearby, at the sacrificial altar, amidst the chanting of Vedic *mantras*, *tridaṇḍi-svāmī* Bhakti Pramoda Purī Mahārāja[21] and others offered oblations into the fire. All directions were purified by the fragrant, sacred smoke of the *vaiṣṇava-homa* and the very impressive sound of the loud *saṅkīrtana*. Altogether, the occasion was surcharged with transcendental potency and life.

No one could count how many people filled up the *nāṭya-mandira* and the *mandira*, taking *darśana* of the *mahābhiṣeka* with wide eyes. After the *abhiṣeka* the deities were taken to the altar and Śrīla Ācāryadeva himself completed the installation.

At that time, *yatirāja* Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣaka Śrīdhara Mahārāja, *tridaṇḍi-svāmī* Śrīmad Bhakti Vicāra Yāyāvara Mahārāja and other *sannyāsīs* arrived. They were welcomed with garlands and sandal paste and seated on the well-decorated stage in the *nāṭya-mandira*. Thus brilliant lectures commenced in Sanskrit, Hindi, Bengali, Assamese, Oriya and other languages by the *ācāryas*, *tridaṇḍi-sannyāsīs* and scholars learned in *siddhānta*, from various *maṭhas*. *Pūjyapāda* Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja gave a significant lecture on the great contribution of Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha and the superiority of its philosophical views. Śrīla Ācāryadeva then respectfully escorted his guests to the entrance of the altar to inaugurate the opening. At that time, the assembled multitude vibrated their *jaya-dhvani*, *hari-dhvani* and the ladies' ululating. This mixed with

21 Editor: see Appendix page 403



Śrī Ācārya Kesarī together with some *sannyāsīs* at the inauguration festival of the deities

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the auspicious sound of conch shells and the *mṛdaṅgas* and *karatālas* from the *saṅkīrtana*, and filled all directions. Śrīmad Bhakti Saudha Āśrama Mahārāja and Śrīmad Bhakti Vikāśa Hṛśīkeṣa Mahārāja came with their entire *parikramā* parties at the time of the inauguration, and in the evening they were joined by *tridaṇḍi-svāmī* Śrīmad Bhakti Sāraṅga Gosvāmī Mahārāja and *tridaṇḍi-svāmī* Śrīmad Bhakti Dayita Mādhava Gosvāmī Mahārāja and their respective parties.

Śrīman Mahāprabhu and Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Vinoda-bihārī were installed in the middle chamber. In the chamber to Their right is *dhāmeśvara* Śrī Koladeva (Varāhadeva) and Lakṣmī-devī, and on Their left is the deity of *jagad-guru* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda. Śrīla Ācāryadeva bestowed *darśana* of Them upon the whole world.

After the installation, *tridaṇḍi-svāmī* Bhakti Deśika Ācārya Mahārāja performed *arcana*, and offered *bhoga* and *āratī* to the deities. After *bhoga-āratī*, *mahā-prasāda* was distributed to thousands and thousands of people. The audience was enchanted by the deities' unprecedented sweetness, and unanimously declared that they had never before seen such beautiful deities.

Paramārādhya Śrīla Ācāryadeva declared at the occasion, "Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti has taken a vow to destroy irreligiosity (*adharma*), corrupt activities (*kudharma*), that which opposes religion (*vidharma*), heresy (*apadharma*), deceitful religion (*chaladharma*) and so on. To this end, we have installed Śrī Koladeva (Varāhadeva) who is the Lord of the *dhāma* (*dhāmeśvara*) of Koladvīpa, together with Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga and Rādhā-Vinoda-bihārījī, in this huge and



The deities in Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha

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Śrī Koladeva (Varāhadeva)

prominent temple in Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma. But constructing large temples is not the sole purpose of preaching; it is a limb of *arcana*. The foremost purpose of preaching is *kīrtana-sevā* under the guidance of Śrī Rūpa. We have not established this prominent temple and huge temple room in Śrī Dhāma Navadvīpa only for deity worship. Rather, the topmost perfection of Vedānta is the symbol of *bhaktisiddhānta-vāṇī*, the preaching of *kīrtana-bhakti*. Within my heart, I followed the path of the *mahājanas* and have thus established the foundation of this *maṭha-mandira*. The purpose of the *mandira* is to preach *siddhānta-vāṇī* through the transcendental sound of *śrī nāma-saṅkīrtana* blended with the nectar flowing from my Śrī Gurudeva's mouth. The construction of the temple, the auspicious task of installing the deities and other work has been completed by means of *śrī nāma-saṅkīrtana*."

"We have not established this prominent temple and huge temple room in Śrī Dhāma Navadvīpa only for deity worship. ... The purpose of the *mandira* is to preach *siddhānta-vāṇī* through the transcendental sound of *śrī nāma-saṅkīrtana* blended with the nectar flowing from my Śrī Gurudeva's mouth."

One of the godbrothers of our most worshipful Śrīla Ācāryadeva was attracted by Śrīla Ācāryadeva's qualities and wrote an essay in *Śrī Gauḍīya-patrikā*, which included the following commendation:

"According to Śrīla Prabhupāda's commentary on *yāra mantre sakala mūrtite vaise prāṇa* (*Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata, Antya-khaṇḍa* 2.305), in the Śrī Gauḍīya *sampradāya*, as prescribed by Śrī Gaurahari, the deity is installed by chanting the *mahā-mantra*. Only *nāma-saṅkīrtana* can remove the misconception that the deity is stone. The verse *kṛṣṇa varṇam tviṣākṛṣṇam* shows that Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanyadeva has prescribed the chanting of the *mahā-mantra* as the appropriate and affectionate worship of the deity. Worship and *darśana* of the deities are lifeless where Bhagavān is not served by the worshipper's inner love and affection, but instead by mere wealth or as a ritual. No matter what system one is following, worship has life if performed with the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* as chanted by Śrī Gaurasundara.

"Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha in Koladvīpa has today assumed a new splendour, for it is

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now decorated with a new temple crowned with nine prominent sky-high domes, a huge *nāṭya-mandira*, living quarters for devotees, a building for the printing press, a school for spiritual education and a charitable dispensary. The devotees of this place have dedicated themselves to serving the instructions of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, as explained by Śrī Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda. The disciples of *parivrājakācārya tridaṇḍi-svāmī* Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Mahārāja, who are expert in *bhajana*, jointly performed the inauguration ceremony of Śrī Guru-Gauraṅga-Gāndharvikā-Vinoda-bihārījī and Śrī Varāhadeva in the new temple, in accordance with the procedure of our *śrī rūpānuga-guru-paramparā*. This has created a new atmosphere in Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma."

A large *dharma-sabhā* (religious assembly) was arranged in the Śrī Hari-kīrtana Nāṭya-mandira on the evening of the third day of Śrī Dhāma *parikramā*. At Śrīla Ācāryadeva's request, *yati-pravara tridaṇḍi-svāmī* Śrīmad Bhakti Sarvasva Giri Mahārāja accepted the chairman's seat. *Tridaṇḍi-svāmī* Śrīmad Bhakti Bhūdeva Śrautī Mahārāja and *tridaṇḍi-svāmī* Śrīmad Bhakti Saurabha Bhaktisāra Mahārāja addressed the assembly after which Śrīla Ācāryadeva spoke on the difference between Vaiṣṇava and *māyāvāda* philosophies in regard to *śrī vigraha-tattva*. He then recited *Śrī Rādhā-Vinoda-bihārī-tattvāṣṭakam* and explained why the deity of Śrī Vinoda-bihārī does not have Śrī Kṛṣṇa's dark complexion. He concluded by glorifying the late Śrī Giridhārī dāsa Adhikārī for his outstanding service of constructing the temple, and Śrī Haripada dāsa Adhikārī, who covered all the expenses for constructing the *nāṭya-mandira*. Finally, the chairman of the assembly, Śrīmad Bhakti Sarvasva Giri Mahārāja, closed the evening with an enchanting lecture.

Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma parikramā and Śrī Gaura-janmotsava

On the first day of Śrī Dhāma *parikramā*, the pilgrims took *darśana* of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's place of *bhajana* in Godrumadvīpa, Suvarṇa-vihāra, Nṛsiṁhapallī, Harihara-kṣetra, Haṁsavāhana and other places. On the second day, they visited Samudragaḍha, Champaka-haṭṭa, Vidyānagara and Modadrumadvīpa and then returned to the *maṭha*. On the fourth day they completed *parikramā* of Prauḍhāmāyā, Śrī Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja's *samādhi* and Rudradvīpa. That day, a special assembly was arranged for the evening. Śrīla Ācāryadeva was selected as chairman, and *paṇḍita-pravara* (the best of scholars) Śrīyuta Gopendra Bhūṣaṇa Sāṅkhya-tīrtha Mahodaya was selected as chief guest. Upon Śrīla Gurudeva's request, *tridaṇḍi-svāmī* Bhakti Deśika Ācārya Mahārāja opened the assembly with an attractive lecture in Sanskrit, using śāstric evidences to show that Śrīman Mahāprabhu is Svayam Bhagavān, the original Personality of Godhead. *Paṇḍita-pravara* Śrīyuta Nityānanda Pañca-tīrtha Mahodaya also spoke in Sanskrit, glorifying the greatness of *sādhu-saṅga*. The honourable chief guest Sāṅkhya-tīrtha Mahodaya said that Śrī Keśava Mahārājajī had in fact fully established Koladvīpa by installing the deity of Śrī Koladeva: "Today, the memory of ancient Koladeva has awakened in my heart." He then praised and glorified Śrīla Sarasvatī Prabhupāda.

On the fifth day of *parikramā*, the pilgrims had *darśana* at Śrī Īśodyāna in Antardvīpa,

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Śrī Yogapīṭha – Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's appearance place, Śrī Caitanya Maṭha, the *samādhis* of Śrīla Prabhupāda and Śrīla Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja, Chand Kazi's *samādhi*, Sīmantadvīpa (Simuliyā Grāma) and other places. *Mahā-prasāda* was served at noon at Śrī Jayadeva-pāṭa and the *parikramā* party then returned to Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha. *Tridaṇḍi-svāmī* Śrī Bhakti Sarvasva Giri Mahārāja was the chairman of the religious assembly that evening, and *tridaṇḍi-svāmī* Śrīmad Bhakti Vicāra Yāyāvara Mahārāja, *tridaṇḍi-svāmī* Śrīmad Bhakti Jīvana Janārdana Mahārāja and *tridaṇḍi-svāmī* Śrīmad Bhakti Vāridhi Purī Mahārāja gave lectures. At the end of the program, *tridaṇḍi-svāmī* Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja [the author] gave a beautiful lecture in Hindi.

The sixth day of the *parikramā* was the appearance day of Śrī Gaurasundara. The devotees fasted, *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata* was read in full, and *śravaṇa-kīrtana* was joyfully performed. In the evening, after celebrating Śrī Gaura's appearance, *tridaṇḍi-svāmī* Śrīmad Bhakti Jīvana Janārdana Mahārāja chaired the assembly. *Tridaṇḍi-svāmī* Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Mahārāja, *tridaṇḍi-svāmī* Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Trivikrama Mahārāja, *tridaṇḍi-svāmī* Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Śuddhādvaitī Mahārāja and other *sannyāsīs* lectured on the distinctive characteristics of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's great contribution.

At noon on the seventh day, *yajñā-homa* and other rituals were performed for those who had accepted *dīkṣā*, *sannyāsa* and *bābājī-veśa*. After that, wonderful *mahā-prasāda* was served to twenty or twenty-five thousand invited and uninvited faithful guests.

Śrīla Ācāryadeva was chairman of the religious assembly that evening. First of all were lectures by those who had accepted *sannyāsa* and *bābājī-veśa* the previous day, namely *tridaṇḍi-svāmī* Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Ūrddhvamanthī Mahārāja, *tridaṇḍi-svāmī* Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Rāddhānti Mahārāja and Śrīmad Raghunātha dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja. After that, Śrī Rasika-mohana Vrajavāsī, *paṇḍita* Nimāī Caraṇa Vyākaraṇa-tīrtha spoke, and Śrī Haridāsa Vrajavāsī gave a lecture in Hindi. Finally, the main guest, Śrīla Prabhupāda's accomplished *sannyāsī tridaṇḍi-svāmī* Śrīmad Bhakti Prakāśa Araṇya Mahārāja delivered an attractive discourse. In this way, the sublimely joyful, week-long celebration of Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma *parikramā* and Śrī Gaura-janmotsava took place smoothly and was concluded successfully.

Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha

Our supremely worshipful Śrī Ācārya Kesarī established Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti (Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha) in Kuliyā-nagara (present day Navadvīpa town) to nourish the service of the innermost desires of his *gurupāda-padma*, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda. Today, inside the vast boundary wall of the temple grounds, there is a divine temple with nine huge domes. Śrīla Gurudeva's construction of this *maṭha-mandira* was meticulous and based on philosophical conclusions. Below is a short description of the *maṭha*.

Śrī Narahari Toraṇa

We enter the courtyard of the *maṭha* via the main entrance gate, Śrī Narahari Toraṇa. The words *paraṁ vijayate śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtanam* and *kīrtanīya sadā hariḥ* are carved over this gate. Here Śrīla Gurudeva is waving the victory flag of Śrīman Mahāprabhu's ultimate instruction

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Śrī Narahari Toraṇa
(Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha's main entrance)



Śrī Madana-mohana Toraṇa
(Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha's back gate)

in His *Śikṣāṣṭaka*, namely, to perform *śrī nāma-saṅkīrtana*. Chanting *śrī harināma* has been declared as the life of *sādhana-bhajana*. In order to enter into the divine temple of *bhakti*, one should first sing the glory of *śrī dhāma* (*tad-rūpa vaibhava*) and the worshipful deity. Also on the gate is a glorification [of Navadvīpa] spoken by Śrīla Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura (*Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata, Madhya-khaṇḍa* 5.1), who is the Vyāsadeva of *śrī caitanya-līlā*: "*jaya navadvīpa-nava-pradīpa-prabhāvaḥ pāṣaṇḍa-gajaika-siṁhaḥ* – All glories to the new light of Navadvīpa, who is just like a lion, unparalleled in subduing the elephants of heresy and atheism." We may mention in this context that one of Śrīla Ācāryadeva's intimate godbrothers, Śrī Bhakti Sāraṅga Gosvāmī Mahārāja, gave him the title *pāṣaṇḍa-gajaika-siṁha*, 'the lion who defeats the elephants of heresy and atheism'.

The name Śrī Narahari Toraṇa, as given by Śrīla Gurudeva, refers both to the *tattva* of *āśraya* or *sevā-vigraha* (Śrī Narahari Brahmacārī, who is the personification of service) and to *viṣaya* or *sevya-vigraha* (Śrī Nṛsiṁhadeva, who is the object of service).

Above this arched gateway on each side are two very powerful lions on the heads of two mad elephants. The mad elephants signify offences to the Vaiṣṇavas (*vaiṣṇava-aparādha*). Śrī Jagāī and Śrī Madhāī stand on each side below as doorkeepers, and on the inside of the gateway are Śrī Devānanda Paṇḍita and Śrī Vāsudeva Vipra, who proclaim the glory of Kuliyā Aparādha-bhañjana-pāṭa, the place where offences are nullified. Śrī Devānanda Paṇḍita had committed an offence to the lotus feet of Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita, but later repented by the mercy of Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi. He begged for forgiveness at

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Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita's feet, whereupon Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu also forgave him. By the mercy of Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu, such extremely wicked and godless persons as Jagāī and Madhāī also became great devotees. Vāsudeva Vipra obtained *darśana* of Śrī Gaurasundara here by the mercy of Dhāmeśvara Śrī Koladeva.

Śrī Maṭha consisting of seven sections

Amongst the nine islands (*dvīpas*) of Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma, Śrī Koladvīpa, which is situated on the west bank of the Gaṅgā, is very important. According to *Śrī Bhakti-ratnākara* and Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's *Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma-mahātmya* (*Parikramā-khaṇḍa*) and *Navadvīpa-bhāva-taraṅga*, the twelve forests of Vṛndāvana are situated in a somewhat different order on Śrī Navadvīpa's nine islands. This Koladvīpa is said to be Girirāja Govardhana himself, and *rasika bhaktas* take *darśana* of the banks of the nearby Bhāgīrathī as the place of *rāsa-līlā* (the *rāsa-sthalī*) on the banks of the Yamunā. Adjacent to this *rāsa-sthalī* and to the south is Ṛtudvīpa, which is non-different from Rādhā-kuṇḍa and Śyāma-kuṇḍa. Bahulāvana is situated to the north. Our supremely worshipful Śrīla Gurudeva, the crest jewel of the community of *ācāryas*, established this *maṭha* here only after considering everything written in the *śāstras* about this place.

When we enter the courtyard of the *maṭha* through Śrī Narahari Toraṇa, we have *darśana* of *śrī maṭha*, enclosed within the vast boundary walls. Śrīla Gurudeva divided this *maṭha* into seven sections (*khaṇḍas*) and named them according to philosophical conclusions.

(1) Paramārtha-khaṇḍa – In this section, which is the location of the printing press, etc., the Vedas, Upaniṣads, *Gītā*, *Bhāgavatam* and other *bhakti* texts are published. These *bhakti* scriptures are



Śrī Gauḍīya-patrikā Press

the literary incarnation of Bhagavān. *Bhagavad-bhakti* is preached all over the world through the medium of these books, and for this reason Śrīla Prabhupāda Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī called the printing press the *bṛhad-mṛdaṅga*. He also said that the *tridaṇḍi-sannyāsīs* preaching *śuddha-bhakti* are the living (*jīvanta*) *mṛdaṅga* and they preach Śrīman Mahāprabhu's message of pure *prema-dharma* at home and abroad, according to their ability. This is why our worshipful master, *oṁ viṣṇupāda aṣṭottara-śata* Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, displayed special enthusiasm for preaching and publishing *Vaikuṇṭha Vārtāvaha*, *Śrī Gauḍīya-patrikā* and *Śrī Bhāgavata-patrikā*, as well as the original literature of *śrī bhakti-siddhānta-vāṇī*, instructions on the conclusions of pure devotional service, such as Vedānta, *Bhāgavatam*

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Śrīla Ācāryadeva performing *yajña* at the Kīrtana-khaṇḍa (*śrī nāṭya-mandira*)

and the writings of the Gosvāmīs, with the help of *bṛhad-mṛdaṅga* and *jīvanta-mṛdaṅga*. With this intention he also established Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Catuṣpāṭhī and Śrī Gauḍīya Charitable Dispensary.

(2) Kīrtana-khaṇḍa – In *śrī nāṭya-mandira*, the temple room, *hari-saṅkīrtana* and *kīrtana* of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* and other literatures are always going on. Great personalities give classes and speeches in the large religious assemblies held here.

(3) Upāsya-khaṇḍa – Śrīla Ācāryadeva has named the temple building, crowned with nine distinctive domes, *navadhā-bhakti-mandira*. The names of these nine domes are respectively *śravaṇam*, *kīrtanam*, *smaraṇam*, *pāda-sevanam*, *arcanam*, *vandanam*, *dāsyam*, *sakhyam*, and the highest centre dome, *ātma-nivedanam*. On the top of this dome, in the middle of the Sudarśana *cakra*, is a flute which proclaims to all the inhabitants of the world, *kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ* – constantly chant the holy name of Śrī Hari. The profound meaning is that the inhabitants of the world should assemble in *śrī hari-kīrtana-mandira* for *śrī nāma-saṅkīrtana-yajña*, which is comprised of seven tongues[22]. "*Āgacchantu mahābhāgā*

22 Editor: The Vedic scriptures describe fire as having seven tongues, each of a different colour according to its intensity. ... In the same way Śrī Gaurasundara has sung the glories of the fire of *saṅkīrtana*, which also has seven tongues. They are *ceto-darpaṇa-mārjana* and so forth. Unless the fire of *saṅkīrtana* is kindled and blazes, one's material existence will not be destroyed at the root, and salvation's highest goal, *prema*, will never be achieved. (from *Vijayate Śrī Kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtanam* by Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda, *Rays of The Harmonist*, No. 16, Kārtika 2006)

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Upāsya-khaṇḍa – *navadhā-bhakti-mandira*



Jagad-guru Śrīla Sarasvatī Prabhupāda's *mūrti*

nitya kīrtana-mandire – Welcome; you are very fortunate to come to the *kīrtana-mandira*."

On every dome is the Śrī Brahma-Madhva-Gauḍīya *vaiṣṇava-tilaka*, which attracts the faith of travellers, directing it towards pure Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism, even from far away. The original founders of the four bona fide *sampradāyas* – Śrī Lakṣmī, Śrī Brahmā, Śrī Rudra and Śrī Catuḥsana – are situated inside the four domes of the first floor. Near them, the four *ācāryas* of those *sampradāyas* are seated and duly worshipped, namely, Śrī Rāmānuja, Śrī Madhvācārya, Śrī Viṣṇusvāmī and Śrī Nimbāditya. They thus instruct people who are serious about *sādhana-bhajana* that it is absolutely necessary to accept a bona fide *sampradāya*.

On the four walls of the first floor of the temple are pictures of the ten incarnations (*daśāvatāras*). These ten incarnations of Bhagavān correspond to the gradual development of consciousness and indicate the progressive development of theistic philosophy. In the eastern portion of the first floor, the *vidhi-mārga* and *rāga-mārga*, or *pāñcarātrika* and *bhāgavatīya sādhana-mārga*, have been exhibited in accordance with the instructions of the Gauḍīya *guru-varga*. In the eastern area of the second floor, the Surabhī cow and Indradeva beg for forgiveness at Śrī Govinda's lotus feet. Along with this is the destroyer of all obstacles, Śrī Nṛsiṁhadeva, whose killing of Hiraṇyakaśipu declares victory over demonic people and proclaims the glory of Aparādha-bhañjana-pāṭa, the place which destroys all offences.

Śrīla Gurudeva exhibited his ideal of *ekāntika-niṣṭhā*, single-pointed unflinching faith, in his *guru-sevā* by installing *jagad-guru* Śrīla

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"There is an absolute necessity in this world to worship and serve this *mahāpuruṣa*. If the worship of him is stopped, *bhakti-dharma* will disappear from this world."

Sarasvatī Prabhupāda's *mūrti* and arranging for his daily worship. He has written, "I have installed my *gurupāda-padma*, Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda, in *śrī mandira* of this *maṭha*. We see many so-called *paramahaṁsas* in the world today, but upon consideration, we find that they are not equal to a fragment of this *mahāpuruṣa*, or even to those who have obtained only a particle of dust from his lotus feet. Still, these so-called *paramahaṁsas* are being honoured by worldly people who are devoid of knowledge of the Truth. Many people call Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda the crest jewel of the community of *paramahaṁsas*. I do not object to this, but my personal statement is that he is the master or lord of the community of *paramahaṁsas*. He is empowered to give instructions even to them. For this reason he is called *jagad-guru*.

"This *mahāpuruṣa*, who is *rādhā-pakṣī* (partial towards Rādhā), is famous in England, Germany and all other countries as Śrīla Prabhupāda. Here, first of all, we perform his *āratī*. There is an absolute necessity in this world to worship and serve this *mahāpuruṣa*. If the worship of him is stopped, *bhakti-dharma* will disappear from this world. It will thus be destroyed and go to Rasātala, the lowest hellish region. For this reason the people of this world address him as Prabhupāda."

In the first chamber, Koladeva (Lord Varāha) is installed. Since Satya-yuga He has been bestowing His mercy on devotees such as His exclusive devotee Śrī Vāsudeva Vipra. The glories of Koladvīpa are announced by daily worship of Him and service to Him, in the temple. The name Kuliyā has originated from the word *kola*, as in Koladeva. Places such as Kuliyādaha, Kolergañja, Koler Āmād, Gada Khālira Kol, Tegharir Kol and Kuliyā-nagara (present Navadvīpa town) are all part of ancient Kuliyā. This place is also called Kuliyā-pahāḍapura, because this land is high like a *pahāḍa*, or mountain. In Satya-yuga Śrīla Varāhadeva gave *darśana* to His great devotee Śrī Vāsudeva Vipra and said that in the coming Kali-yuga He would accept the bodily lustre and



Koladeva (Lord Varāha)

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internal mood of Śrīmatī Rādhikā, and in this very place would manifest His greatly munificent pastimes as Śrī Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu. To attain the mercy of this Koladvīpa, which is the island of *pāda-sevanam* and non-different from Girirāja Govardhana, it is essential to pray first of all for the mercy of Dhāmeśvara (Koladeva). Only by His mercy can one achieve the qualification to enter into the munificent pastimes of Śrīman Mahāprabhu.

In the second chamber, Śrī Gaura-Rādhā-Vinoda-bihārījī are installed. Here the supremely wonderful and mysterious white lustre of Śrī Vinoda-bihārījī, who is absorbed in thinking of Śrī Rādhā, eludes even the *bhajana* secrets of the *bhajanānandis'*. Śrīla Ācāryadeva has personally explained it: "Śrīman Mahāprabhu is Himself Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Yugala, and Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa are worshipped by *śrī gaura-mantra*. People may ask why the three deities in this temple – Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and Śrī Gaurasundara – are all white in colour. The answer is that They are not white, but rather have the golden lustre of Śrīmatī Rādhājī. By accepting Śrīmatī Rādhikā's bodily lustre, Śrī Kṛṣṇa has taken on a golden (*gaura*) complexion. The bodily lustre of Śrī Gaurasundara is as fair as pure gold, which is why these three have the same complexion. Here we must understand that the apparently white complexion is actually *gaura* (golden). Why did Śrī Kṛṣṇa take on Śrī Rādhā's *gaura* complexion? The answer is that we are *rādhā-pakṣī*, partial towards Śrī Rādhā. By nature, Śrīmatī Rādhikā's mood towards Śrī Kṛṣṇa is contrary (*vāmya-bhāva*), but is only



Śrī Śrī Gaura-Rādhā-Vinoda-bihārījī

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so to increase the ever-fresh variety of service to Him. Once, Śrīmatījī became angry with Kṛṣṇa and exhibited *māna*, Her indignant contrariness. At that time, Kṛṣṇa became so absorbed in meditating on Her that His *śyāma* complexion changed and became like Hers.

rādhā-cintā-niveśena
yasya kāntir vilopitā
śrī-kṛṣṇa-caraṇaṁ vande
rādhāliṅgita-vigraham

"We refer to this deep mystery in the first verse of *Śrī Rādhā-Vinoda-bihārī-tattvāṣṭakam*. The word *rādhāliṅgita* has two meanings: (1) *rādhayā liṅgita* and (2) *rādhayā āliṅgita*.

"The word *liṅgita* means 'having the appearance of'. Śrī Kṛṣṇa lost His own complexion and assumed Śrīmatī Rādhikā's due to being very absorbed in thinking of Her in separation. This is the deep meaning of *rādhāliṅgita-vigraha*. It is this deity that has been brought to light here. The meaning of this deep *tattva* has been illuminated by the crest jewel of *rasika* Vaiṣṇavas, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, in his *Śrī Svapna-vilāsāmṛta*. And this fundamental truth has manifested to the world by my *śrīla gurupāda-padma*, Śrīla Prabhupāda, having come from the core of his heart.

"The second meaning of *rādhāliṅgita* is *rādhayā āliṅgita*, or 'embraced by Rādhā'. The confidential meaning of this has been spoken by Śrī Rāya Rāmānanda to Śrīman Mahāprabhu on the banks of the Godāvarī:

pahile dekhiluṅ tomāra sannyāsi-svarūpa
ebe tomā dekhi muñi śyāma-gopa-rūpa

tomāra sammukhe dekhi kāñcana-pañcālikā
tāṅra gaura-kāntye tomāra sarva aṅga ḍhākā
tabe hāsi' tāṅre prabhu dekhāila svarūpa
'rasa-rāja', 'mahābhāva'—dui eka rūpa

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta
(*Madhya-līlā* 8.268, 269, 282)

Śrī Rāya Rāmānanda asked Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, "At first I saw Your form as a *sannyāsī*, and now I am seeing Your dark-complexioned form as a cowherd boy (Śrī Śyāmasundara). At the same time I am seeing a golden-complexioned *devī* in front of You, whose golden lustre fully covers Your dark lustre." ... Upon hearing this, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu laughed and gave *darśana* of Kṛṣṇa in His distinctive golden complexion as Rasarāja-mahābhāva combined. Śrī Rāya Rāmānanda fainted in bliss when he saw this unprecedented sweet form.

"So this is another explanation of the deep mystery of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's golden complexion. Kṛṣṇa's *śyāma* complexion has been completely covered by Śrīmatī Rādhikā's embrace, and He is manifesting Her bodily brilliance.

"Among people who serve on the path of the most advanced *vipralambha-bhajana* (meditation in a mood of separation), nearly all remember (perform *smaraṇa* of) Śrīmatī Rādhikā's feelings of separation from Śrī Kṛṣṇa. However, our *śrī gurudeva*, Śrīla Prabhupāda, is a *sakhī* of Śrīmatī Rādhikā, and therefore he used to remember the moods of separation that Śrī Kṛṣṇa experienced in regard to Śrīmatī Rādhikā. My *gurudeva* was partial towards Śrī Rādhā, so he was more inclined to see Śrī Kṛṣṇa experience separation from Śrīmatī Rādhikā, rather than the other way around. Śrīmatī Rādhikā is grief-stricken in separation from Kṛṣṇa – this is the perfection of *vipralambha-bhāva* prayed for by

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ordinary *sādhakas*. However, Śrīla Prabhupāda's viewpoint is completely the opposite. When Śrī Kṛṣṇa was completely engrossed in the mood of Śrīmatī Rādhikā, He lost His *śyāma* complexion and manifested as *rādhālińgita-vigraha*. In other words, He attained the colour of Śrīmatī Rādhikā. Śrīman Mahāprabhu preached this very *vipralambha-rasa* and gave instructions on it. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is anxious for Śrī Rādhārāṇī – this is the ideal of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti."

(4) Sevaka-khaṇḍa – The place where all the *sevakas* of Śrī Śrī Gaurasundara and Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Vinoda-bihārījī live, perform service and take rest has been called *sevaka-khaṇḍa*. This section has also been separated into two parts: (a) the *bhajana-kuṭī* of Śrīla Gurupāda-padma, and (b) the living quarters, or *bhajana-kuṭīs*, of Śrīla Gurudeva's *sevakas*. Among these rooms are the *kuṭis* of Śrīla Gurudeva's *sannyāsīs* and *brahmacārīs*.



Sevaka-khaṇḍa



Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja's *bhajana-kuṭīra*

(5) Bhoga-khaṇḍa – The storage room and the kitchen are called the *bhoga-khaṇḍa*. This section, adjacent to Śrīla Gurudeva's *bhajana-kuṭīra*, is also divided into two: (a) the kitchen for the daily cooking, and (b) the kitchen for Navadvīpa-dhāma *parikramā* and other special festivals. This large kitchen has permanently fixed massive stoves, on which gigantic pots are placed for cooking sixteen to twenty maunds (one maund equals about forty kilograms) of rice or forty maunds of *sabji*, at one time. About twenty very able-bodied cooks prepare the *bhoga* for Ṭhākurajī. Between fifteen and twenty thousand pilgrims all sit together in the huge courtyard of the *maṭha* to honour *prasāda*. The serving of *mahā-prasāda* at that time is a wonderful sight, unseen anywhere else in the world.

(6) Govardhana-khaṇḍa – The place where the cows live is known as the *gośālā* or *govardhana-*

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khaṇḍa. The cows here are very beautiful. Yoghurt, *ghee*, *khīra*, *paramānna*, etc., are made from their milk and offered to Ṭhākurajī.

(7) Jñāna-khaṇḍa – The lavatory for the residents and the pilgrims is called *jñāna-khaṇḍa*, the section about knowledge. The principal limb of *śaraṇāgati* is to give up objects and moods that are unfavourable for *bhakti*. *Nirviśeṣa-jñāna* and activities that are not performed for Bhagavān are opposed to *bhakti*. For this reason *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (5.14.43) instructs us to give up such knowledge and activities, just as one gives up stool after passing:

yo dustyajān dāra-sutān
suhṛd rājyaṁ hṛdi-spṛśaḥ
jahau yuvaiva malavad
uttamaśloka-lālasaḥ

Mahārāja Bharata entered the forest to perform *bhajana*, leaving his wife, son, relatives, friends and kingdom, just as one gives up stool after evacuating.

In *Śrī Prema-bhakti-candrika* (8.8) it is also said: "*karma-kāṇḍa jñāna-kāṇḍa kevala viṣera bhāṇḍa* – Both *karma-kāṇḍa* (fruitive activities) and *jñāna-kāṇḍa* (mental speculations) are like pots of poison. Knowing these two to be opposed to *bhakti*, devotees of Bhagavān abandon them like stool."

Also, *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Madhya-līlā* 22.87) tells us:

asat-saṅga-tyāga,—ei vaiṣṇava-ācāra
'strī-saṅgī'—eka asādhu, 'kṛṣṇābhakta' āra

Giving up bad association (*asat-saṅga*) is a primary aspect of Vaiṣṇava conduct. Bad association is of two types: (a) persons who have illicit association with women, or who associate with such people and who are materially attached to them, and (b) non-devotees who are intent on knowledge of the formless aspect of the Absolute (*nirviśeṣa-jñāna*). *Sādhakas* striving for *bhakti* should carefully reject these two types of bad association.

Of these seven sections of the *maṭha*, the first six are favourable to *bhakti* and are to be respected, because they are directly the *svarūpa* of *bhakti*. The seventh section signifies *nirviśeṣa-jñāna* and is to be rejected because it is opposed to *bhakti*. Śrīla Gurupāda-padma has divided *śrī maṭha* into these seven sections and named them in this way in accordance with the viewpoint of this *bhakti-siddhānta*.

Discussion regarding touched and untouched bhoga in Śrī Jagannātha Mandira

On 3 November 1963, an article was published in the Bengali daily newspaper *Yugānantara* regarding *bhoga* worth thousands of rupees being thrown away in Purī. "Today, 1 November, a person who was not engaged in deity service touched the *bhoga* by sight before it was offered to Śrī Jagannāthajī in the evening. This resulted in an uprising among the cooks, and the police had to intervene. In accordance with temple procedure, thousands of rupees worth of *bhoga* was disposed of and buried in the ground." (VNI 1.11.1963)

Paramārādhyatama Śrīla Gurudeva commented on this incident as follows: "We are attracting the attention of the public by this incident, which Śrī Jagannātha-deva Himself

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has arranged. Some people try to disregard the offence of touch in *bhagavat-sevā*, and want to dismiss as insignificant the distinction between 'touched' and 'untouched'. Such people are hypocrites and are opposed to the path of *dharma*. We should accept this teaching of Śrī Jagannātha-deva and always remain on the path of distinguishing between 'touched' and 'untouched' *bhoga*, according to scriptural rules. We should also instruct others to stay on this path. This deceitful concept is atheistic, and we should never let it enter into the worship of Bhagavān, whether it comes from Western atheists or native atheists. Even today the conception of food as lawful or unlawful is observed in Śrī Jagannātha temple and exists in different systems all over India. We consider those who do not acknowledge the offence of touch (*sparśa-doṣa*) to be untouchables.

"It is not an offence to touch the preparation after it has been offered to Śrī Jagannātha-deva, for the *bhoga* prepared by the cooks then becomes *mahā-prasāda*. But no one has the right to touch the *bhoga* before it is offered, apart from Śrī Jagannātha-deva's servants who are qualified to prepare and offer it. No offering (*naivedya*) that has been touched by an unqualified person can ever be offered to Śrī Jagannāthajī. This is the correct understanding.

"Human beings should only accept Śrī Bhagavān's remnants, and it is improper to give anyone anything that Śrī Jagannāthajī has not accepted. Śrī Jagannāthajī is using this incident to teach us that Bhagavān does not want to accept any unofferable substances. There is another instruction within this one. Meat, fish, eggs, tobacco, tea, *bīḍīs*, cigarettes, chewing tobacco, alcohol, coffee, onion, garlic and so on cannot be included in an offering to Bhagavān. Therefore, all these substances are to be rejected. Those who make use of these unlawful substances in service to the deity belong to non-bona fide *sampradāyas* and have no connection with Hindu *sanātana-dharma*. The *śāstras* call such people outcastes (*mlecchas*) or those born in the lowest caste (*antyaja*)."

The servants of Śrī Jagannātha-deva, along with virtuous men following Hindu *dharma*, were very pleased with Śrīla Gurudeva's argument.

Preaching in Siliguḍi and Bihāra

After Śrī Dhāma Navadvīpa *parikramā* and Śrī Gaura-janmotsava in 1963, *paramārādhya* Śrīla Gurudeva went preaching for a week with his associates to various places in the Sundaravana region, including Maīpīṭha-Vinodapura, Damakala and Kāśīnagara. From there, he went all around Siliguḍi and preached *sanātana-dharma* (*śuddha-bhakti*) extensively for almost a month, from 21 April to 18 May.

During the same period in the following year, 1964, he preached *vaiṣṇava-dharma* with *sannyāsīs* and sixteen *maṭha* residents in Sārasājola, Āsanavanī, Rājavandha, Palāśī, Bāramāsiyā, Dhādikā, Kumaḍāvāda, Dumakā town and other places in the Dumakā district of Bihāra. Accompanying Śrīla Gurudeva at that time were Śrīpāda Trivikrama Mahārāja, Śrīpāda Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja [the author], Śrīpāda Kṛṣṇa-kṛpā Brahmacārī, Śrī Gajendra-mokṣaṇa Brahmacārī, Śrī Rohiṇī-nandana Vrajavāsī, Śrī Bhagavān dāsa Brahmacārī, Śrī Vṛndāvana-vihārī Brahmacārī, Śrī Cidghanānada Brahmacārī, Śrī Vṛṣabhānu Brahmacārī and other leading *sannyāsīs* and *brahmacārīs*.

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Sārasājola is a well-known and prosperous village in the Dumakā district. Śrīla Gurudeva stayed in Śrī Madhusūdana Vidyānidhi's home in Sārasājola and preached *śuddha-bhakti* there for seven days. All the leading villagers there accepted *vaiṣṇava-dharma* along with their families. Sārasājola became like Kulīna-grāma, whose inhabitants were all great Vaiṣṇava devotees during Śrīman Mahāprabhu's time. In those days, there were only Vaiṣṇavas in the village of Kulīna-grāma; even the village dogs were devotees who observed Ekādaśī and other *vratas*. Similarly, Sārasājola became blessed by Śrīla Gurupāda-padma's auspicious arrival there. He lectured for six days there on the following six different subjects:

(1) What is *śāstra*?
(2) The distinction between demigods (*suras*) and demons (*asuras*).
(3) *Kīrtana* is the only beneficial *sādhana*.
(4) To merge with *brahma*, or to become *brahma*, is a curse for the *jīva*.
(5) Īśvara is *saviśeṣa* (with a personal feature) and *sākāra* (with form), not *nirākāra* (formless).
(6) *Nirākāra-vāda* (the doctrine stating that God is formless) is only an atheistic heretical concept (*pākhaṇḍa-vāda*).

Among the other speakers were Śrīpāda Trivikrama Mahārāja, Śrīpāda Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja [the author], Śrī Cidghanānada Brahmacārī and Śrī Rohiṇī-nandana Vrajavāsī.

Śrīla Ācāryadeva gave brilliant discourses in Dumakā town for three days at the Popular Club, Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava temple and the District Council House. Śrīla Gurudeva lectured on subjects such as '*Ṣaḍ-darśana* and *vedānta-vijñāna*', 'The worthlessness of *nirākāravāda*' and '*Dharma-sevā* is the only perfection of society'. At his request, Śrīpāda Trivikrama Mahārāja and Śrīpāda Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja lectured on *śrī gaura-līlā* and *śrī rāma-līlā*. They illustrated these talks, full of *bhakti-siddhānta*, with slide shows. The preaching of *śuddha-bhakti* in these parts of the Dumkā district inspired the people to have unsurpassed faith in *vaiṣṇava-dharma*. Whole groups of them gave up alcohol, meat, fish, smoking and so on, and were initiated into *śuddha-bhakti*. Śrīla Ācāryadeva and his associates returned to Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha after preaching in this way for about a month.

In August 1964, Śrīla Gurudeva was at Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha during the grand and festive celebration of Śrī Śrī Janmāṣṭamī and Śrī Nandotsava. Many educational exhibitions were organized on the *maṭha's* premises, and the devotees eagerly requested Śrīla Gurupāda-padma to open the exhibition. In the religious assembly in the *nāṭya-mandira*, he delivered a lecture on Śrī Janmāṣṭamī which was filled with profound *siddhānta*.

Śrīla Ācāryadeva said that it is a mistake to observe Śrī Janmāṣṭamī and fasting for other *vratas* in accordance with the views of the *smārta* Raghunandana. According to *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*, when Vaiṣṇavas observe these *vratas*, they should abandon mixed *tithis* and observe *śuddha-vrata*. Śrī Kṛṣṇa did not take birth on *saptamī-biddhā-aṣṭamī* (Aṣṭamī mixed with Saptamī), but rather on *navamī-biddhā-aṣṭamī* (which is also called Umā-Māheśvarī *tithi*). Navamī combined with Aṣṭamī *tithi* is therefore the *tithi* to be observed for the *vrata*. *Abhijita-muhūrta* (the eighth *muhūrta* of the day, a very powerful *muhūrta* at about midday), the Rohiṇī constellation and other considerations are also of special importance for this *vrata*.

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Śrīla Ācāryadeva preaching śuddha-bhakti in Kolkata and Medinīpura

In 1964, upon the insistent entreaty of Śrī Sudhīra Kumāra Sāhā, the owner of the famous Bhavānī Paper Concern in Kolkata, Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti's founder-*ācārya*, along with many *sannyāsīs* and *brahmacārīs*, observed *ūrja-vrata niyama-sevā* for one month, at his Kening Street residence. For that month, his home was transformed into Śrī Vaikuṇṭha-dhāma. Every day *maṅgala-āratī*; *saṅkīrtana*; reading from *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and other *bhakti* literatures; *sandhyā-āratī* and other devotional activities took place. Many educated, respected and prosperous persons from Kolkata participated. Śrīla Gurudeva regularly explained the dialogue between Vasudeva and Nārada in the Eleventh Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Teachers, lawyers, educationalists, highly posted officials and many others were very attracted when they heard his *Bhāgavatam* lectures, which were full of excellent *siddhānta*. From time to time, Śrīpāda Trivikrama Mahārāja, Śrīpāda Vāmana Mahārāja, Śrīpāda Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja [the author] also spoke on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

Śrīla Gurudeva returned to Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha and from there preached in different regions of Medinīpura and inaugurated the temple in Kalyāṇapura. He also preached *sanātana-dharma* in Sābaḍāveḍe Jalpāī and other places. *Śrī vyāsa-pūjā* was held with great pomp and ceremony in his presence in Khāmaṭī-grāma.

In the next year, 1965, after Śrī Dhāma *parikramā* and Śrī Gaura-janmotsava, Śrīla Ācāryadeva went to Śrī Siddhavāḍī Gauḍīya Maṭha with many *sannyāsīs* and *brahmacārīs* and there he laid the foundation stone for *śrī mandira*. After returning, he preached for a month in Goloka-gañja, Baṅgoi-grāma, Māthābhāṅgā, Śītala Kuci, Siliguḍi and other places in Assam, and then returned to Śrī Uddhāraṇa Gauḍīya Maṭha, Chuṅchurā.

Preaching śuddha-bhakti in Śrī Mathurā, Vṛndāvana, Lukhnow and Kāśī

During *kārtika-vrata niyama-sevā* in September and October 1966, Śrīla Ācāryadeva performed the eighty-four *krosa* Śrī Vraja-maṇḍala *parikramā* with many pilgrims. First of all, Śrīla Ācārayadeva went to Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha, where Śrī Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja [the author] and Śrī Bhaktivedānta Muni Mahārāja offered him garlands and sandal paste in a grand reception. Śrīla Gurupāda-padma entrusted the responsibility of the *parikramā* to Śrīpād Harijana Mahārāja and took rest in Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha for a month. Afterwards he went to preach in Lukhnow, Prayāga, Vārāṇasī and Gāyā with Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja [the author] and a few *brahmacārīs*, and then returned to Chuṅchurā.

While Śrīla Gurupāda-padma was staying in Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha in Mathurā, many educated people of the city came to hear his *hari-kathā*. Among them, the principal of Śrī Māthura Caturveda College, Śrī Gayā Prasāda Saksenā (Employment Exchange Officer) and Śrī Pītāmbara Pantha (SDOMES) are particularly worth mentioning. In Lukhnow Śrīla Ācāryadeva accepted Śrī Pītāmbara Pantha's special invitation and for three days stayed at his residence with

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some *sannyāsīs* and *brahmacārīs*, and then left for Kāśī. While there he collected the Veda (the original scripture of the science of transcendental sound vibrations), some rare sacred literatures and a large brass bell weighing two maunds (about eighty kilos) for the *maṭha* in Navadvīpa. After staying in Kāśī for three days, he returned to Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha.

Śrīla Ācārya Kesarī in Śrī Caitanya Gauḍīya Maṭha, Kolkata

From 26 January to 1 February 1967, there was a large annual week-long festival at Śrī Caitanya Gauḍīya Maṭha in Kolkata. The new temple and temple room were inaugurated with a great celebration during this time. *Nitya-līlā-praviṣṭa* Śrī Śrīla Bhakti Dayita Mādhava Gosvāmī Mahārāja was the president and founder-*ācārya* of Śrī Caitanya Gauḍīya Maṭha and its branches in India. He personally went to invite our worshipful Śrīla Gurudeva and other Gauḍīya *ācāryas* to participate in this big therefore, many of *jagad-guru* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda's *sannyāsīs* took part. Some of the prominent *sannyāsīs* among them are mentioned here:

(1) *Parivrājakācārya tridaṇḍi-svāmī Śrī*mad Bhakti Rakṣaka Śrīdhara Mahārāja;
(2) *Parivrājakācārya tridaṇḍi-svāmī Śrī*mad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Mahārāja;
(3) *Parivrājakācārya tridaṇḍi-svāmī Śrī*mad Bhakti Bhūdeva Śrautī Mahārāja;
(4) *Parivrājakācārya tridaṇḍi-svāmī Śrī*mad Bhakti Sarvasva Giri Mahārāja;
(5) *Parivrājakācārya tridaṇḍi-svāmī Śrī*mad Bhakti Pramoda Purī Mahārāja;
(6) *Parivrājakācārya tridaṇḍi-svāmī* Śrīmad Bhakti Kamala Madhusūdana Mahārāja;
(7) *Parivrājakācārya tridaṇḍi-svāmī Śrī*mad Bhakti Āloka Paramahaṁsa Mahārāja;
(8) *Parivrājakācārya tridaṇḍi-svāmī* Śrīmad Bhakti Vikāśa Hṛṣīkeśa Mahārāja;
(9) *Parivrājakācārya tridaṇḍi-svāmī* Śrīmad Bhakti Prāpana Dāmodara Mahārāja;
(10) *Parivrājakācārya tridaṇḍi-svāmī Śrī*mad Bhakti Kumuda Santa Mahārāja.

*Paramapūjya tridaṇḍi-svāmī Śrī*mad Bhakti Rakṣaka Śrīdhara Mahārāja performed the inauguration of the newly constructed temple and temple room. *Pūjyapāda tridaṇḍi-svāmī Śrī*mad Bhakti Bhūdeva Śrautī Mahārāja and *pūjyapāda* Bhakti Pramoda Purī Mahārāja performed the installation of the deities, the Vaiṣṇava *homa-yajña* and other ceremonies.

Every evening for three days, religious assemblies were held which were attended by learned audiences. *Paramārādhya* Śrīla Gurudeva gave three lectures filled with *tattva-siddhānta* on 'The necessity of *maṭha* and *mandira*', 'The teachings of the *Gītā*', and '*Yuga-dharma*'. Each day a different dignitary chaired the assembly: the honourable Śrīyuta Dīpanārāyaṇa Simha (Kolkata High Court's main judge), Śrī Śambhunātha Banarjī (Kolkata University's former vice-chancellor) and judge Śrīyuta Pareśanātha Mukharajī.

Śrīla Ācāryadeva said in one of his lectures, "The leading judge of the High Court of Bengal is present here at this religious conference. The fact that he is present in the *maṭha* and *mandira* is proof of the necessity for their existence. The authors of our *smṛti-śāstras* say that it is not proper to reside where there are no *maṭha-mandiras*.

"Nowadays many people question whether one will get food just by calling out to Kṛṣṇa. This country can never be prosperous as long as this materialistic point of view persists. Modern politics are devoid of *siddhānta* and religious

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belief. In ancient times, the country was ruled according to the codes and rules drawn up by the sages. Today our country disregards these rules and has taken up western teachings. It is very sad that society allows the slaughter of cows and other animals and the consumption of alcohol, and that *dharma* has no place in the constitution of the nation. It is also unfortunate that this constitution makes no provision for religious people. On the contrary, religious people are faced with anxiety and inconvenience for no reason.

"It is easy for anyone to understand that the *sādhus'* renunciation is a great help to the country. The government has not yet been able to solve the problem of unemployment. No one can tell how many more thousands of unemployed people there would be if all the highly educated persons presently residing in *maṭhas* were to move back into society and seek employment, whether in service, business or agriculture. If they wanted to take up farming, there would not be enough land to accommodate them.

"These days the suicidal and self-destructive teaching, '*ahaṁ brahmāsmi* – I am *brahma*, the Supreme Absolute', is being disseminated in many *maṭhas*, *mandiras*, missions and *sevāśramas*. This is turning the public into atheists opposed to *dharma*."

The audience listened very eagerly as Śrīla Ācāryadeva, a fearless speaker of the impartial truth, expressed his revolutionary views. His brilliant lecture went on for almost one hour, after which other speakers also presented their views. When the assembly ended, all the *sannyāsīs* and *brahmacārīs* of Śrī Caitanya Gauḍīya Maṭha came to Śrīla Ācāryadeva's lotus feet, praising his views and asking questions concerning the philosophical conclusions of *bhakti*.

Inauguration of Śrī Vāsudeva Gauḍīya Maṭha in Vāsugrāma, Assam

Śrī Pārvatīcaraṇa Rāya, a prominent gentleman from Vāsugrāma in the Gvālapāḍā district, Assam, repeatedly requested Śrī Gurupāda-padma to establish a preaching centre of the Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti in Vāsugrāma. For this purpose, he also donated some land near his residence in the centre of the market. On 21 May 1967, Śrīla Ācāryadeva went there with Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Mahārāja, Śrī Mukunda Gopāla Brahmacārī and six other *sevakas*. A large assembly was organized on the second day, which was Śrī Nimānanda Sevā-tīrtha Prabhu's appearance day. Śrīla Ācāryadeva was the chairman, and on his request Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Mahārāja, Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Urddhavamanthī Mahārāja, Śrī Gajendra Mokṣaṇa Brahmacārī and others gave very heartfelt lectures on this *mahāpuruṣa's* great contribution to the preaching of *śrī gaura-vinoda-sārasvata-vāṇī* – the teachings of Śrīman Mahāprabhu, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. Afterwards Śrīla Guru Mahārāja gave an attractive lecture full of *siddhānta* about Sevā-tīrtha Prabhu.

After preaching *śuddha-bhakti* for some days in Goloka-gañja, Śrīla Ācāryadeva came to Vāsugrāma with his followers. There Śrī Vāsudeva Gauḍīya Maṭha was established on the land given by Śrī Pārvatī Bābū by the extraordinary endeavour of Śrī Viśvarūpa Brahmacārī (BA), the headmaster of the local high school. After seeing Śrī Viśvarūpa Prabhu's unwearying service endeavours and enthusiasm during the establishment of the *maṭha*, Śrīla Ācāryadeva appointed him the *maṭha* president. Śrīmad

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Urddhvamanthī Mahārāja and Śrī Sārathī Kṛṣṇa Brahmacārī stayed in this new *maṭha* to carry on the preaching. Religious assemblies were organized for three days. Śrīla Ācāryadeva lectured, as did Śrīmad Vāmana Mahārāja, Śrīmad Urddhvamanthī Mahārāja and others. After some time, Śrī Śrī Gaura-Rādhā-Vinoda-bihārījī were installed, with *parama-pūjyapāda* Śrīla Bhakti Bhudeva Śrautī Mahārāja as the officiating priest.

Lecture in the law court library and district library of Siūḍī

On 21 June 1967, Śrīla Gurudeva, along with his associates, made his auspicious arrival in Siūḍī and stayed for some days at Śrīyuta Umāpada Sādhu's (Śrī Urukrama dāsa Adhikārī's) residence, where Śrīla Gurudeva preached *śuddha-bhakti*. One day he lectured at the law court's library and the next day at the local district library on 'The modern situation and *sanātana-dharma*'. On the other days Śrī Urukrama dāsa Adhikārī gave brilliant lectures on 'Vaiṣṇava literature and culture' in *śrī mandira*.

On 17 February 1968, a huge *vyāsa-pūjā* festival took place in Rāmanagara Ābādagrāma. Upon the special request of Śrīmatī Nārāyaṇī-devī, *tridaṇḍi-svāmī Śrī* Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Mahārāja came there with several *sannyāsīs* and *brahmacārīs* and observed a great *vyāsa-pūjā* celebration. Extensive religious assemblies went on for three days. *Pūjyapāda* Śrī Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Mahārāja, the chairman of these assemblies, delivered scholarly lectures on *vyāsa-pūjā* and *sanātana-dharma*.

The *vyāsa-pūjā* celebration observed for three days at Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha in Śrī Dhāma Navadvīpa was particularly wonderful, because *paramārādhyatama* Śrīla Gurudeva was personally present.

Entering aprakaṭa-līlā

After *vyāsa-pūjā*, Śrī Dhāma Navadvīpa *parikramā* took place with great pomp and ceremony. It was at this time that *paramārādhyatama* Śrīla Gurudeva began his pastime of illness. He stayed for some days at the home of Śrīyuta Rādheśyāma Sāhā and for a few more days with Śrī Kṛṣṇa-gopāla Vasu Mahodaya in Kolkata for medical treatment. The service rendered by these two gentlemen during that time was most praiseworthy.

On 3 October 1968, Śrīla Ācāryadeva was brought back from Kolkata to his *bhajana-kuṭī* at Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha. Finally, on Sunday, 6 October 1968 (19 Āśvina 1375 Baṅgābda), the Śāradīya-rāsa Pūrṇima, during *sandhyā-āratī* (6.15 p.m.), p*aramārādhyatama śrīla gurupāda-padma oṁ viṣṇupāda aṣṭottara-śata* Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja left us all drowning in an ocean of separation and entered Śrī Yugala-Kiśora's *sāyana-nityā-līlā*, Their evening pastimes.

The following description was written by someone suffering pangs of separation from his master. It was published in *Śrī Gauḍīya-patrikā*, Year 20, Issue 5:

"*Ācārya kesarī oṁ viṣṇupāda paramahaṁsa aṣṭottara-śata* Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja is the founder of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti. He is also the dear and intimate associate of Śrī Brahma-Madhva-Gauḍīya *sampradāya's* guardian *ācārya-bhāskara paramahaṁsa mukuṭa-maṇi nitya-līlā-praviṣṭa jagad-guru oṁ viṣṇupāda aṣṭottara-śata* Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī

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Samādhi-mandira at
Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha



The *samādhi-mūrti* of *ācārya kesarī*
Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja

Gosvāmī Prabhupāda. Sunday, 6 October 1968, was the auspicious day of Śāradīya-pūrṇimā and the first day of *śrī dāmodara-vrata*. That evening, at the time of the lunar eclipse, at Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha in Śrī Dhāma Navadvīpa, *ācārya kesarī* Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja was surrounded by his servants who had taken shelter of his lotus feet, his *sannyāsī* and *ācārya* godbrothers, renunciant and householder devotees, and gentlemen who had become charmed by his qualities. Leaving them all drowning in an ocean of separation, he, of his own free will, entered *nitya-dhāma* Śrī Goloka Vṛndāvana and the *sāyana-līlā* of his worshipful Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Vinoda-bihārī.

"Renunciant and householder devotees from all over India had assembled at Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha that day. From early morning, eminent *sannyāsīs* and *sevakas* had been tenderly singing *kīrtanas* such as *jaya rādhe jaya kṛṣṇa*, *je ānila prema-dhana*, *śrī-rūpa-mañjarī-pada*, and *rādhe jaya jaya mādhava dayite* by Śrī Narottama Ṭhākura, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and other *mahājanas*. *Sandhyā-āratī* was going on in the temple, and here, Gurudeva, together with the devotees, was thoroughly absorbed in performing *kīrtana* in a faint voice. He then entered *nitya-līlā*, uttering 'Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare, Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma Hare Hare', holding the picture of his most worshipful *gurudeva* to his breast.

"Just as this happened, an astonishing event occurred. The head *pujārī* of *śrī mandira* came there with Śrīmatī Rādhikā's garland in his hands

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and tearfully said, 'Right at the end of *sandhyā-āratī*, Śrīmatī Rādhikā's garland broke by itself and fell from Her neck. I have never seen this before.' Everyone present understood this to mean that Śrīmatī Rādhikā, out of mercy, had called Her beloved *sahacarī*, companion and attendant, to *sāyana-līlā-vilāsa*.

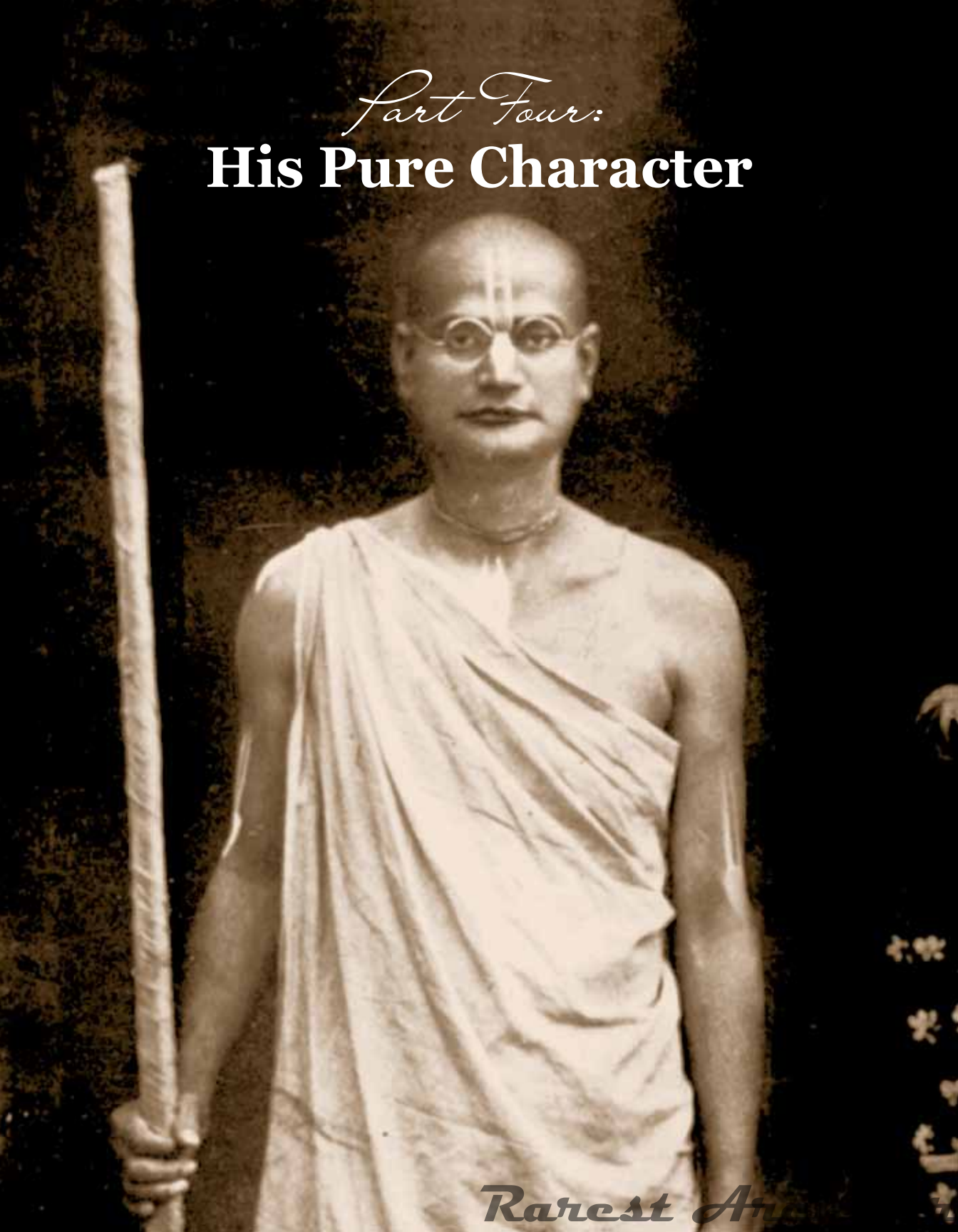
"In a moment the news that Śrīla Gurudeva had entered *aprakaṭa-līlā* spread to all the Gauḍīya Maṭhas on both banks of Bhagavatī Bhāgīrathī. Thousands of faithful people assembled to offer *puṣpāñjali* to *paramārādhyatama* Śrī Gurudeva's lotus feet, and the *samādhi* ceremony was performed under the guidance of *prapūjya-caraṇa* Śrīmad Bhakti Śrīrūpa Siddhāntī Mahārāja, according to the method of *Samskāra-dīpikā*. As the assembled multitude performed *hari-kīrtana*, Śrīla Ācāryadeva was given *samādhi* in front of Śrī Śrī Guru-Gauraṅga-Rādhā-Vinoda-bihārījī's temple, whose high domes seemed to kiss the sky."

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Part Four:

His Pure Character



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A hint of his internal identity

At Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha in Śrī Dhāma Navadvīpa, fresh construction work was in progress on the grand temple, replete with nine domes. In the altar room (*garbha-mandira*) a platform was being prepared for the deities. *Paramārādhya* Śrīla Gurudeva came into the *garbha-mandira* to decide on the shape of the altar and the number and colour of its steps. Śrīpāda Bhaktivedānta Muni Mahārāja and I [the author] were with him. Śrīla Gurudeva surveyed the area, decided on the length, width and height of the altar, and then became immersed in thought. After a while he turned to us and said, "There will be three steps below the altar. The highest step will be blue, the second step yellow and the bottom step will be *aruṇa-varṇa*, the reddish-pink at dawn."

Śrīpāda Muni Mahārāja asked, "Why should it be so?"

Śrīla Gurudeva replied, "The highest step will symbolize the sapphire-like lustre of Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The second step will represent the golden radiance of Śrīmatī Rādhikā, the crest jewel of Kṛṣṇa's sweethearts." Then he remained silent for a few moments. Assuming an extremely grave countenance, he continued, "The third step will be the colour of a *sakhī* (here refers to a *mañjarī*) who brings all kinds of delight (*vinoda*) to Yugala-Kiśora, the divine Youthful Couple. She is depicted by *aruṇa-varṇa*."



As he was speaking, his voice faltered, his throat choked, and he became completely motionless. Seeing his extraordinary *bhāva*, we were both struck with wonder.

At that time we could not understand anything, nor could we muster up the courage to ask him. But after he entered *aprakaṭa-līlā*, the unmanifest pastimes, we realized the meaning of that hint. The lowest step symbolizes Śrī Vinoda Mañjarī, Śrī Yugala-Kiśora's eternally playful maidservant. Śrīla Gurudeva had given a hint of

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his own *siddha-deha*, his eternal spiritual form, in a very hidden way.

It was around that same time that I inquired from him in private, "Did your *gurudeva* reveal the identity of the *siddha-deha* of any of his disciples?"

Solemnly, Śrīla Gurudeva replied, "He has certainly done so. Śrīla Prabhupāda has given the identity of the *siddha-deha* and instructions in the method of *bhajana* (*bhajana-praṇālī*) to some of his qualified disciples; otherwise the *śrī rūpānuga* line would come to an end. He also mercifully gave this *praṇālī* to me."

I again asked, "Will you bestow your mercy and reveal the name of your *siddha-deha*?"

Śrīla Gurudeva replied, "Not just now. At the appropriate time it will be disclosed."

The inferiority of direct perception

Once *paramārādhyatama* Śrīla Gurudeva was returning to Śrī Dhāma Navadvīpa from Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha by train. Four or five *brahmacārīs*, including me [the author], were all sitting with him in a reserved compartment. When the train pulled out of Mathurā Junction, a railway magistrate accompanied by a few soldiers came to check our compartment. Having done so, he sat down in a vacant seat right next to Śrīla Gurudeva, and immediately asked him, "Mahātmājī, where are you coming from?"

Gurujī: We have just come from Mathurā. We have an *āśrama* called Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha opposite the district hospital.

Magistrate: And where are you going?

Gurujī: We are going to our headquarters in Śrī Dhāma Navadvīpa.

Magistrate: What is the aim of your organization?

Gurujī: We preach pure *sanātana-dharma* throughout the world. Specifically, following in the footsteps of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, we preach and practise *harināma-saṅkīrtana* and *śuddha-bhakti* as described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and other scriptures. The only aim of our organization is to attract the living entities to this auspicious path.

Magistrate: What do you mean by *bhakti*?

Gurujī: The creator and conductor of the universe is the one supremely merciful, all-powerful Truth. This ultimate Truth is known as Īśvara, Paramātmā or Bhagavān. Although we are all His parts and servants, we have forgotten this, and we have thus been subjected to the threefold miseries in various species of life in this material world since time immemorial. Without the mercy of Bhagavān we cannot be released from the bondage of material existence. *Bhakti* means to observe the injunctions described in the scriptures for the sake of pleasing Bhagavān.

Magistrate: You people believe in God, but I do not believe in the existence of any God. I do not put any faith in anything which does not appear before these eyes. Is Bhagavān visible to the eyes?

Gurujī: Although you speak like this, you are obliged to accept the existence of many things that you cannot see.

Magistrate: You may say that. Nevertheless, the fact is that I have no faith in anything I cannot see directly with my eyes.

Gurujī: That is not true. Are your mother and father still alive?

Magistrate: Yes, they are still living.

Gurujī: Can you say for certain that the person you call 'Father' is actually your genuine father? If so, then what evidence is there? Is it visible to

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"If you can put your faith in so many different fault-ridden textbooks or in your own defective and limited sense perception, then why not put faith in the Vedas and other authoritative scriptures, which are beyond human origin, devoid of all kinds of defects, and not subject to faults such as illusion and negligence."

your own eyes that he is the man who impregnated your mother when she conceived you?

When the honourable magistrate heard this question, he became embarrassed and could not answer.

Gurujī: No. You did not witness this incident which occurred prior to your birth, so you do have faith in the unseen. You accept with confidence that he is your father just on the word of your mother and family members.

Magistrate: What you have said is absolutely correct. I have come to know the identity of my father by putting faith in the words of my mother and family members.

Gurujī: In the same way all the scriptures are like a mother in the sense that they are authoritative evidence. They include the Vedas, which are not of human origin, and literatures such as the *Gītā*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *Rāmāyaṇa*, which support the Vedic version. They say repeatedly that the creator and director of the universe is Īśvara, or God. He is referred to as *brahma*, Paramātmā and Bhagavān.

If you can put your faith in so many different fault-ridden textbooks or in your own defective and limited sense perception, then why not put faith in the Vedas and other authoritative scriptures, which are beyond human origin, devoid of all kinds of defects, and not subject to faults such as illusion and negligence. The Vedic scriptures are even more reliable and trustworthy than your mother.

In the Vedas it is stated:

> *yato vā imāni bhūtāni jāyante*
> *yena jātāni jīvanti*
> *yat prayanty abhisaṁviśanti*
> *tad vijijñāsasva tad brahma*
>
> *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (3.1)

> One should inquire about that *brahma* from whom all living entities emanate, who maintains their existence and into whom they all ultimately enter.

Furthermore in *Brahma-sūtra* (1.1.2) it is said, "*janmādy asya yataḥ* – *brahma* is He from whom the creation, maintenance and destruction of the universe arises." In *Bhagavad-gītā* (10.8), Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa has also said:

> *ahaṁ sarvasya prabhavo*
> *mattaḥ sarvaṁ pravartate*
> *iti matvā bhajante māṁ*
> *budhā bhāva-samanvitāḥ*

> I am the source of both mundane and spiritual worlds. Everything emanates from Me. The wise who know this well engage in *bhajana* of Me, with transcendental emotion in their hearts.

The Vedic scriptures are the unerring illuminator of the Supreme Truth. These literatures are not created by any human being of limited intelligence. From time immemorial, Manu and

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all the great sages headed by Nārada, Vyāsa and Vālmīki have tested and realized the validity of this fact. Highly intelligent people and *ācāryas* such as Śrī Śaṅkara Ācārya, Śrī Rāmānuja Ācārya and Śrī Madhva Ācārya have also acknowledged the evidence presented in the Vedic scriptures and accepted the existence of God. Therefore it is quite appropriate and in your own best interest to accept this conclusion.

Magistrate: You have opened my eyes. I understand that I have been quite wrong up till now.

In the meantime, the train reached Āgrā Cantonment. He touched Gurujī's lotus feet with great faith, and said, "I have to get off here, but in the future I will visit Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha."

Other passengers had sat down around us, eager to hear the magistrate's conversation with Gurujī. They were truly impressed by the exchange and went on discussing the subject of *dharma* with Gurujī for the rest of the journey.

Discussion with the Communist Jyoti Bābū

In 1951 or 1952, *paramārādhya* Śrīla Gurudeva had gone to the border region of Sundaravana in Bengal before Śrī Dhāma Navadvīpa *parikramā* to preach *śuddha-bhakti*, to invite faithful people to join the *parikramā*, and to collect provisions for the *parikramā*. One day Śrī Gurudeva was taking us with him to the house of a faithful devotee when he encountered Jyoti Bābū with some of his followers. Jyoti Bābū, who later became the chief minister of Bengal, was at that time the main chairman of the Communist party of Bengal. As a leader of the opposition party, he had come to investigate the condition of the flooded land in the border region. When he saw Śrī Gurudeva dressed in saffron cloth and carrying his *tridaṇḍa*, he stopped and asked in a very arrogant way, "From where are you coming?"

Śrī Gurudeva replied politely, "We are from Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti in Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma."

Jyoti Bābū: Have you come to inspect the state of the flooded area and show sympathy for the people?

Gurudeva: We have come to preach pure *vaiṣṇava-dharma* for the eternal welfare of the living entities, and to collect some provisions for Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma *parikramā*.

Jyoti Bābū: Can't you see that the lives of these people have been thrown into turmoil by the terrible flood? Their crops have been ruined, and village after village has been submerged. They are expecting help from others for food and clothing, yet you have come to beg alms from these very people?

Gurudeva: The flood has come? Where is it? So far the cigarette at your lips has not been extinguished, so where is the flood? Dear Sir, this flood is not the real flood. We have come here to extinguish the fire of devastation that is afflicting the *jīvas* birth after birth, and to protect the living beings from the real flood waters, which come at the time of the universal inundation.

We have come here so that those *jīvas* who are averse to Kṛṣṇa may attain their natural condition of everlasting happiness. A living entity can never be happy as long as he does not adopt the principles of *dharma* in his life and as long as he does not worship Bhagavān. Atheistic life is animal life. You are going to ruin Bengal and India completely by accepting the conception of Western civilization.

Jyoti Bābū: We do not believe in the Vedic scriptures. We believe in hard work. Work (*karma*)

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is life, work is God. It is because of people like you that this country has gone to hell. You people should do some work yourselves and then give instructions about work. Begging alms is the occupation of cowards.

Gurudeva: It is atheists like you who have caused the devastation of India. India was happier and more civilized than the other countries of the world as long as her politics were governed by *dharma* and her people were faithful and religious. In ancient times stalwarts like Hiraṇyakaśipu, Rāvaṇa, Duryodhana and Kaṁsa were far greater advocates of *karma* than you are, but the scriptures recount how they all came to an abominable end. More recently, we have heard of Alexander the Great and Napoleon and in modern times champions of *karma* like Hitler, Mussolini and Lenin. Have you not observed their miserable fate? There is no place in India for atheists like Cārvāka and others. India is the country of *sanātana-dharma*. No one can vanquish this *sanātana-dharma*, no matter how influential he may be. A day will come when you will not even have the opportunity to repent.

When Jyoti Bābū heard Gurudeva's answer, he was at a loss for words. He promptly departed in a tantrum, accompanied by his followers.

Śrī Gurudeva was a fearless speaker of the impartial truth. Before his powerful arguments, even the most proficient logicians used to bow their heads in defeat.

Śrī Gurudeva and the alms received

Once (in around 1951) Śrīla Gurudeva stayed at Śrī Uddhāraṇa Gauḍīya Maṭha, which was the headquarters of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti at that time. From there he went out and preached *śuddha-bhakti* everywhere. The *sevā* and *pūjā* in the Maṭha, as well as Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma *parikramā* and other activities, used to run on whatever alms came from *madhukarī*. Before Śrī Dhāma Navadvīpa *parikramā*, I [the author] went with *parama-pūjyapāda* Śrī Śrīmad Nārasiṁha Mahārāja to Śrī Rāmapura and other towns near Kolkata to preach and beg alms.

After preaching and performing *bhikṣā* for fifteen days we returned to Śrī Uddhāraṇa Gauḍīya Maṭha, having collected a total of two hundred and fifty rupees, which at that time was a large sum of money. As soon as I arrived, I offered my *praṇāma* at *paramārādhyatama* Śrīla Gurudeva's lotus feet. After giving his blessings, he asked, "How was the preaching?"

"The preaching went very well," I replied. "We collected about two hundred and fifty rupees." Gurujī was very pleased. Some time later *pūjyapāda* Nārasiṁha Mahārāja came before Gurujī, offered his *praṇāma* and put the donation in Gurujī's hand. Śrī Gurudeva asked, "How much is it?"

"Two hundred and twenty-five rupees," replied *pūjyapāda* Nārasiṁha Mahārāja.

"Where are the remaining twenty-five rupees?" asked Śrīla Gurudeva.

"I have kept some rupees for my personal expenses," replied Mahārāja.

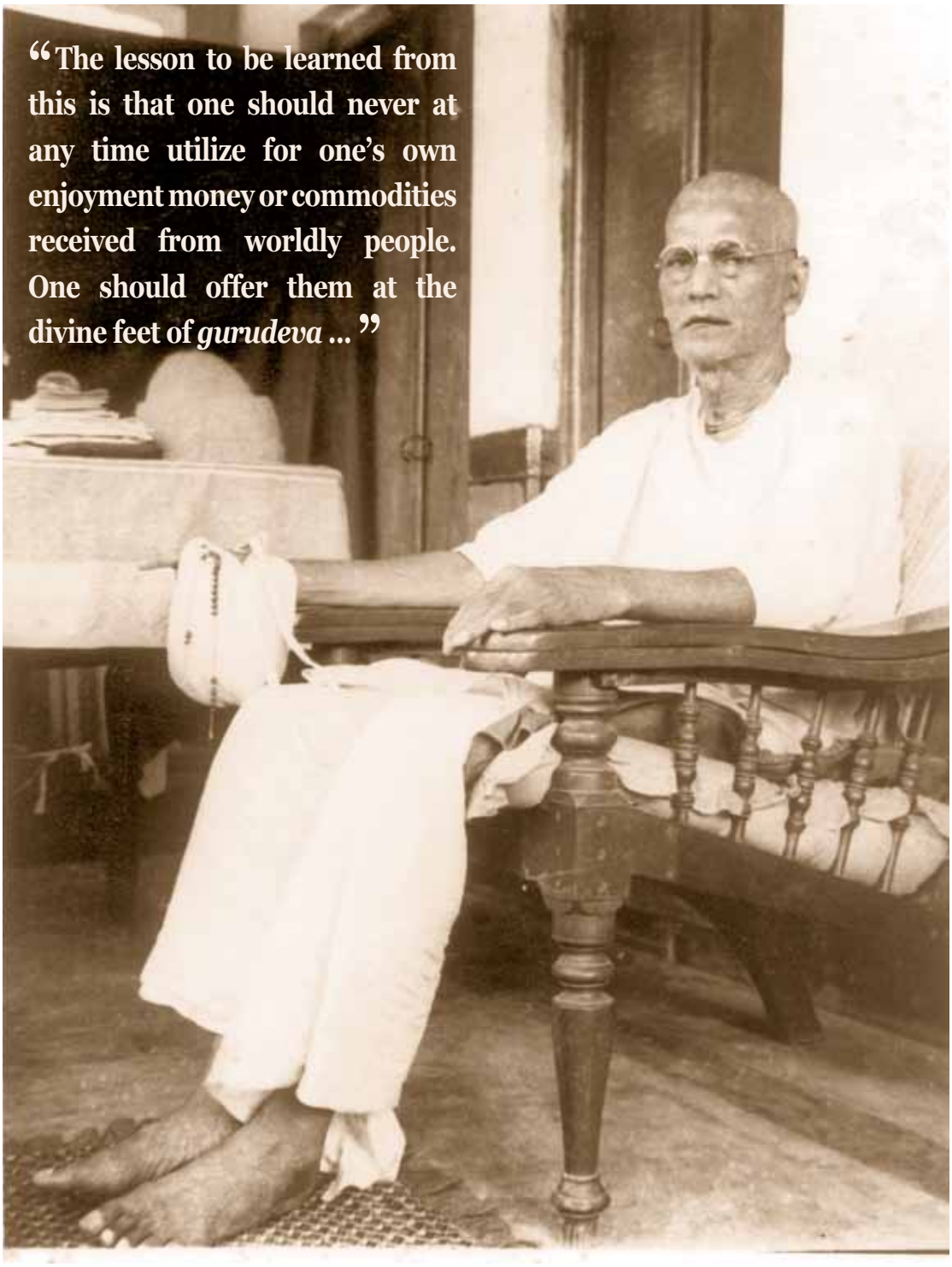
"Bring those donated rupees right now and give them to me," said Śrī Gurudeva.

Śrīpāda Nārasiṁha Mahārāja was somewhat angry and said, "Can't we keep even a few rupees for our immediate expenses?"

"First please kindly give them to me."

Pūjyapāda Mahārāja somewhat resentfully went to his *bhajana-kuṭī*, brought back the

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"The lesson to be learned from this is that one should never at any time utilize for one's own enjoyment money or commodities received from worldly people. One should offer them at the divine feet of *gurudeva* ... "

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remaining twenty-five rupees, and threw them down in front of Śrīla Gurudeva. Gurujī picked up the money, counted it and then returned those very same rupees.

"If you are just going to return them, then what was the point in taking them in the first place?" asked Śrīpāda Nārasiṁha Mahārāja.

Śrī Gurudeva became quite grave and said, "The food and wealth of sensuous people contains poison which ordinary people cannot digest. It has been written in *śāstra* that when a *sādhaka* eats food from a sense enjoyer, his heart becomes wicked and it is not possible to remember Bhagavān with such a disturbed mind. Therefore *sādhakas* should always be careful. Śrī Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī is direct proof of this. He did not accept the money sent by his own father, because although his father appeared to be a Vaiṣṇava, he was actually not (*vaiṣṇava-prāya*). Even advanced *sādhakas* have been deviated and have fallen from the realm of *bhajana* due to eating the food of sensuous people. That is why I have taken this money from you. It was acquired from sense enjoyers, and therefore it was mixed with poison. Now I have purified it and I am giving it back to you. There is no danger in it any more.

"Disaster is guaranteed if even one *paisa* that has been collected in the name of Śrī Hari, Guru and Vaiṣṇavas is used in one's own service. I do not use even a single *paisa* from donations for my own purposes. Who can engage donated wealth in the service of Hari, Guru and Vaiṣṇavas? Only a highly qualified Vaiṣṇava who has offered his body, mind, words and everything at the feet of *śrīla gurudeva* and the Supreme Lord, who is unconditionally surrendered at the lotus feet of Bhagavān, and who is empowered in *bhajana*. Ordinary temple devotees cannot."

When *pūjyapāda* Nārasiṁha Mahārāja heard this, he became thoroughly ashamed and all misgivings were dispelled from his heart. Bowing his head, he said with complete humility, "Please forgive me. I never took this matter so seriously. Whatever you are saying is completely correct. I will follow this instruction the rest of my life."

The lesson to be learned from this is that one should never at any time utilize for one's own enjoyment money or commodities received from worldly people. One should offer them at the divine feet of *gurudeva* or equally elevated Vaiṣṇavas, because such Vaiṣṇavas can engage these commodities in the service of Bhagavān. Otherwise, their poison is deadly for the *sādhaka*. Śrīman Mahāprabhu has said:

> *viṣayīra anna khāile malina haya mana*
> *malina mana haile, nahe kṛṣṇera smaraṇa*
>
> *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*
> (*Antya-līlā* 6.278)

When one eats food offered by sensuous or worldly people, the mind becomes contaminated, and in that state one cannot remember Kṛṣṇa.

> *pratigraha kabhu nā karibe rāja-dhana*
> *viṣayīra anna khāile duṣṭa haya mana*
>
> *mana duṣṭa haile nahe kṛṣṇera smaraṇa*
> *kṛṣṇa-smṛti vinā haya niṣphala jīvana*
>
> *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*
> (*Ādi-līlā* 12.50–51)

One should never accept alms from royalty or wealthy people because when one eats such food the mind becomes polluted. A polluted mind cannot remember Kṛṣṇa, and without remembrance of Kṛṣṇa one's whole life is a failure.

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Śrī Gurudeva on the svarūpa of the jīva

In 1955, *kārtika-vrata niyama-sevā* and the eighty-four *kosa* Vraja-maṇḍala *parikramā* were brought to a successful conclusion under the guidance of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti. Some of Śrīla Prabhupāda's most learned *sannyāsī* disciples came from other Gauḍīya Maṭhas after the *parikramā* and assembled at Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha in Mathurā to meet with Śrī Gurudeva. In addition, some of Śrīla Prabhupāda's senior *sannyāsīs* and *brahmacārīs* had already been with Śrī Gurudeva during the *parikramā*. Consequently, since so many godbrothers had come together in one place, a special *iṣṭagoṣṭhī* took place in which many prominent *sannyāsīs* and *brahmacārīs* were present, along with Śrī Gurudeva. They included *prapūjya-caraṇa* Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Rakṣaka Śrīdhara Mahārāja, Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Bhūdeva Śrauti Mahārāja, Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Vicāra Yāyāvara Mahārāja, Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Dayita Mādhava Mahārāja, Śrī Narottamānanda Brahmacārī (Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Kamala Madhusūdana Mahārāja), Śrī Mahānanda Brahmacārī (Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Āloka Paramahaṁsa Mahārāja), Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Vikāśa Hṛṣikeśa Mahārāja, Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Vijñāna Āśrama Mahārāja, Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prāpaṇa Dāmodara Mahārāja and Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Jīvana Janārdana Mahārāja.

The youngest in that assembly, Śrīpāda Bhakti Vikāśa Hṛṣikeśa Mahārāja, was very inquisitive about *tattva*. Full of humility, he folded his hands and said, "For a long time I have had a doubt about the *svarūpa* of the *jīva*. I have scrutinized many Gosvāmī literatures, and I have also asked my senior godbrothers, but so far my doubt has not been dispelled. In *Sanātana-śikṣā* in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Madhya-līlā* 20.108) it is stated that the *jīva* is Kṛṣṇa's *nitya-dāsa* and has manifested from Kṛṣṇa's *taṭasthā-śakti*:

> *jīvera 'svarūpa' haya—kṛṣṇera 'nitya-dāsa'*
> *kṛṣṇera 'taṭasthā-śakti', 'bhedābheda-prakāśa'*

"From this verse it seems that the quality of being the servant of Kṛṣṇa is eternally latent in the very constitution of the living being. Consequently his service, his name, his form and so on must be present in some form or other in his constitutional nature, which is now covered by *māyā*. However, it can also be said that, since the *jīva* is a transformation of *taṭasthā-śakti*, his *svarūpa* should also be *taṭasthā*: '*guru-kṛṣṇa-prasāde pāya bhakti-latā-bīja* – by the mercy of *guru* and Kṛṣṇa the living being receives the seed of the *bhakti* creeper' (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā* 19.151). From this point of view it seems that the *jīva* is constitutionally an infinitesimal particle of consciousness who obtains the *bhakti-latā-bīja* by the mercy of *guru* and Kṛṣṇa. In that case, the nature of his perfected condition will be in accordance with the nature of the seed he receives.

"Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura also supports this idea in *Śrī Prema-bhakti-candrikā*: *sādhane bhābiba jāhā siddha-dehe pāba tāhā, rāga pathera ei se upāya*. This verse informs us that perfection will be in accordance with whichever type of *sādhana* is practised.

"Superficially, it seems that there are two contradictory points of view. Is it that some specific service tendency is eternally present in the eternal form of the *jīva*, and that perfection is attained accordingly? Or is it that one's method of devotional practice determines the perfected

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"It is inconsistent to suppose that the *svarūpa* of the *jīva* manifests according to the type of *sādhu-saṅga* one has. For example, not even the association of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His associates could change the hearts of Anupama Gosvāmī and Murāri Gupta."

condition that one finally attains? Please, kindly clear up my confusion in this matter."

When *prapūjya-caraṇa* Yāyāvara Mahārājajī heard this question, he became overjoyed and humbly requested *pūjyapāda* Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Rakṣaka Śrīdhara Mahārāja to answer. *Prapūjya-caraṇa* Śrīdhara Mahārāja was highly knowledgeable in the Vaiṣṇava scriptures and was an erudite philosopher. He began to answer this profound question.

"The nature of the living entity is compared to an atomic conscious particle of the spiritual sun, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The living being has been described in the Gosvāmī literatures as the *vibhinnāṁśa-tattva* of *brahma*. The meaning of *vibhinnāṁśa-tattva* is that when Bhagavān, who possesses the potency to make the impossible possible (*aghaṭana-ghaṭana-paṭīyasī śakti*), is equipped only with His atomic conscious *jīva-śakti*, then His expansion (*aṁśa*) is called a *vibhinnāṁśa-jīva*. However, when that same Bhagavān is replete with all of His potencies, then His expansion is called *svāṁśa*. Thus the *vibhinnāṁśa jīvas* are eternal. It is certain that their methods of *bhagavat-sevā*, and their names, forms and so on are inherent. Yet the *jīva's* transcendental form and characteristics remain concealed because he is covered by *māyā*. By the grace of Bhagavān, one's inherent *svarūpa* becomes manifest as one performs *bhajana* in the company of saintly persons (*sādhus*) and becomes freed from *māyā*. It is also certain that, unless one has *sādhu-saṅga*, release from *māyā* and the manifestation of the *svarūpa* are both quite impossible. For this reason, *sādhu-saṅga* is absolutely essential.

"It is inconsistent to suppose that the *svarūpa* of the *jīva* manifests according to the type of *sādhu-saṅga* one has. For example, not even the association of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His associates could change the hearts of Anupama Gosvāmī and Murāri Gupta. Murāri Gupta is considered to be Hanumān, Śrī Rāmacandra's associate. Śrīman Mahāprabhu pointed out to him that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is adorned with more sweetness than Śrī Rāmacandra, and furthermore that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is also the origin of all incarnations (*avatārī*). After hearing from Mahāprabhu, Murāri Gupta vowed to give up Śrī Rāmacandra and to perform *kṛṣṇa-bhajana*.

"But when he came before Śrī Mahāprabhu the next day he began to cry, saying, 'I took a vow before You to worship Śrī Kṛṣṇa, but I could not sleep the whole night. On the one hand, I have offered my head at the feet of Śrī Rāmacandra and I cannot leave Him. On the other hand I cannot transgress Your order. Either way, I cannot continue living.' As he spoke he fell down at Śrī Mahāprabhu's feet. Śrīman Mahāprabhu lifted him up and embraced him, saying, 'You are so fortunate; you are an eternal associate of Śrī Rāmacandra. The way in which you are serving Him is auspicious for you. I am overflowing with joy to see your ecstatic sentiments.'

"Later on, when Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu was in Śrī Raṅgam during His tour of South India, He met

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with Śrī Vyeṅkaṭa Bhaṭṭa, Śrī Trimalla Bhaṭṭa, Śrī Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī and Vyeṅkaṭa Bhaṭṭa's son Gopāla Bhaṭṭa. Śrīman Mahāprabhu quoted from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and other scriptures regarding the supremacy of the sweetness of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's form and other attributes. He proved the pre-eminence of Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa's loveliness, and consequently their hearts were changed. They accepted initiation in the *kṛṣṇa-mantra* and they all became engaged in serving Kṛṣṇa, following the sentiments of Vraja.

"One noteworthy point here is that, according to our Gosvāmīs, Śrī Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī is Tuṅgavidyā Sakhī in *vraja-līlā* and Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī is Śrī Guṇa Mañjarī. For pastime purposes, they both appeared in South India and were performing their *sādhana-bhajana* after accepting initiation in the Śrī *sampradāya*, but constitutionally, they were *gopīs* of Vraja. Although they had already been initiated into the Śrī *sampradāya*, they were attracted to the service of Śrī Kṛṣṇa by the influence of Śrīman Mahāprabhu's association.

"Śrī Rūpa and Sanātana similarly told their younger brother Śrī Vallabha, also known as Anupama, about the beauty and sweetness of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's *svarūpa* and the ultimate superiority of His loving dalliances, His *prema-vilāsa*. They also advised him to perform *kṛṣṇa-bhajana*. Anupama was very much influenced by his brothers' words and took *dīkṣā* in the *kṛṣṇa-mantra*, expressing the desire to perform *kṛṣṇa-bhajana*. However, early the next morning he fell crying at their feet and said:

> *raghunāthera pāda-padma chāḍāna nā yāya*
> *chāḍibāra mana haile prāṇa phāṭi' yāya*
>
> *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*
> (*Antya-līlā* 4.42)

> I have sold my head at the feet of Śrī Raghunāthajī. Please be merciful to me so that I may serve His lotus feet birth after birth. My heart breaks simply at the thought of giving up His lotus feet.

"Śrī Rūpa and Sanātana were very happy to hear the words of their younger brother. Praising and congratulating him, they took him in their arms and embraced him.

"From this it is evident that *sādhu-saṅga* assists in manifesting the *svarūpa* of the *jīva*, but *sādhu-saṅga* cannot change his *svarūpa*."

Having said this, *prapūjya-caraṇa* Śrīdhara Mahārāja requested our *gurupāda-padma* Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja to say something on this subject. Śrīla Gurudeva said, "Whatever we have deliberated upon, and whatever we have seen in Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava literature definitely supports your conclusion. The *jīva* has his own *siddha-svarūpa*; his inherent name, form and so on, are all eternal. Each of the innumerable individual *jīvas* has his own separate *svarūpa*, but the *jīva* has forgotten this due to being covered by *māyā*.

"When by good fortune the *jīva* attains pure *sādhu-saṅga* and the mercy of *guru*, *māyā* gradually begins to go away and his *svarūpa* begins to manifest. We can give a material example to illustrate this. If different types of seeds such as mango and jackfruit are sown in the same piece of land on the bank of a river, different types of plants or trees will come from the different types of seeds, even though the river gives the same water to each of them, the same wind blows on them, and the same sunlight shines on them all. When they mature, each will produce a different type of fruit. This testifies that different types of seeds manifest their inherent natures as different

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"Their particular features are not directly manifest in the seed, but still the seedling and the tree with its leaves, branches, fruits, flowers and flavour are present in the seed in an unmanifest form. ... In the very same way, everything – the *jīva's* constitutional name, form, bodily limbs and nature – are present in an unmanifest form within him."

types of trees with their own particular fruits and flavours, even when they are all exposed to the same natural elements. It is also true that without the water, air, sunshine, etc., they cannot sprout and attain their mature form. Furthermore, it is true that even though they all associate with the natural elements in the same way, they manifest different trees with different fruits and flavour. Their particular features are not directly manifest in the seed, but still the seedling and the tree with its leaves, branches, fruits, flowers and flavour are present in the seed in an unmanifest form. We never see a deviation from this.

"In the very same way, everything – the *jīva's* constitutional name, form, bodily limbs and nature – are present in an unmanifest form within him. When the essence of *hlādinī* and *saṁvit* arises in the heart of the *jīva* by the association of bona fide *guru* and Vaiṣṇavas, then the *jīva's* constitutional form, whatever it may be, gradually begins to manifest.

"We can give another material example. At the time of the stellar constellation known as Svāti, raindrops falling on an oyster produce a pearl; on a banana tree, camphor; on a snake, a precious jewel; on an elephant, the *gaja-mukta*, or elephant pearl; and when they fall on the hoof of a cow, *gorocanā*, a bright yellow pigment, is produced. One type of water causes different substances to manifest because of the different receptacles. Similarly, when different disciples are influenced by the association of one *guru* or Vaiṣṇava, they manifest service moods in different *rasas* and varieties of spiritual perfection. In *Jaiva-dharma*, Śrī Vrajanātha and Vijaya Kumāra heard everything from the same *guru*, Raghunātha dāsa Bābājī. Still their respective tastes manifested differently. They both attained perfection, but for Vrajanātha it was in *sakhya-rasa* and for Vijaya Kumāra it was in *madhura-rasa*.

"According to *Śrī Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta*, when Śrī Nārada Gosvāmī and Śrī Uddhava saw Gopa Kumāra, they ascertained that he was constitutionally an associate in *sakhya-rasa*. He had the association of Śrī Nārada Gosvāmī, Uddhavajī, Hanumānjī and others, but no one's influence changed his natural *sakhya-bhāva*.

"If association could change one's inherent service, then why didn't the *gopīs'* association change Uddhava's *svarūpa*? Śrīmatī Yaśodā also associated with the *gopīs*, but her *svarūpa* did not change. The confidential purport is that in the stage of practice, the *sādhaka* performs *sādhana-bhajana* according to his association, as long as he does not realize his *svarūpa*. However, when his *anarthas* have gone, his inherent mood appears in the form of some particular taste (*ruci*) and begins to reveal his identity. *Śrī gurudeva* notices his natural taste, and merely indicates his relationship and eleven types of *bhāva*, thereby enabling him to make progress in *bhajana*.

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"Sometimes a *sādhaka* who by nature is of a higher *rasa* can engage in service in a lower *rasa* by the association of devotees in *dāsya* and *sakhya-rasa*. However, when he is not satisfied and later comes into higher association, he will give up the previous moods and attain his inherent *bhāva*.

"The opinion of Śrī Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, the Seventh Gosvāmī, is quite clear on this matter. In his explanation of the verse *ceto-darpaṇa-mārjanam* (*Śrī Śikṣāṣṭaka* 1) he has written:

"'ceto-darpaṇa-mārjanaṁ ityādinā jīvasya svarūpa-tattvaṁ vivṛtam. tathā śrīmajjīvavacaraṇāḥ—jīvākhya-samaṣṭa-śakti viśiṣṭasya parama-tattvasya khalvaṁśa eko jīvaḥ. … tathā śrīmad-vedāntabhāṣyakāro 'pi—vibhu-caitanya-mīśvaro 'ṇu-caitanyaṁ jīvaḥ, nityaṁ jñānādi-guṇakatvaṁ asmadartha tvaṁ cobhayatra jñānasyāpi jñātṛtvaṁ prakāśasya raveḥ prakāśakatvavadaviruddham. … etena jīvasyāṇutvaṁ cit-svarūpa tvaṁ śuddhāhaṅkāra-śuddha-citta-śuddha-deha-viśiṣṭatvaṁ ca jñāpitam. pareśavaimukhyāt bahiraṅga-bhāvāviṣṭatvācca śuddhāhaṅkāragata śuddha-cittasyāvidyāmaladūṣaṇamapi sūcitam.

"'The correct conception of *svarūpa-tattva* of the *jīva* has been given in the verse *ceto-darpaṇa-mārjanam*. Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī's conclusion on this subject is that when the Supreme Absolute Truth is equipped with the sum total of the *jīva-śakti*, His minute expansion is known as a *jīva*. Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, who compiled the *Śrī Govinda-bhāṣya* on *Vedānta-sūtra*, is of the same opinion: Īśvara is the supremely conscious Being (*vibhu-caitanya*), whereas the *jīva* is a minutely conscious being (*aṇu-caitanya*). Īśvara is eternally radiant with all auspicious and unlimited, transcendental qualities. He has a completely pure ego. He is both the knower and the embodiment of knowledge. Similarly, the *jīva* also has his own pure *svarūpa*. Most of the qualities of Īśvara are also partially present in the *jīva* and he has a pure ego. This conception is not opposed to logic, for the qualities of the sun are also seen in the atomic particles of sunshine, and similarly the qualities of the Supreme Truth are also observed to be partially present in the *jīvas*. But, because the living being is averse to the Supreme Controller, his pure *svarūpa* is concealed by *māyā*. Conversely, when he becomes inclined towards the Supreme, the curtain of the covering potency *māyā* is withdrawn, and the *jīva's* pure *svarūpa* and qualities are then uncovered. Immediately thereafter he has the direct perception of his own *svarūpa*.

"'From this conclusion it is evident that the *jīva* is an infinitesimal atomic particle of consciousness. He has an inherent spiritual identity, *cinmaya-svarūpa*, in which his pure ego, pure consciousness, pure form, method of service and so on are definitely present.'

"'śravaṇa-kīrtanādi-sādhana-samaye yadā śuddhā-bhaktir udeti tadā svasyā 'vidyatvaṁ parihṛtya vidyayā cidetara vitṛṣṇājananī sāpi jīvasya sthūla-liṅgamaya-saupādhika-deha-dvayaṁ vināśya tasya svarūpagata śuddha-cid-dehaṁ adhikārabhedena madhura-rasāsvādanā yatanaṁ gopikā-deham api prakaṭayati.

"'As the *sādhaka jīva* goes on hearing and chanting, pure *bhakti* appears in his heart, and the function of the essence of *hlādinī* and *saṁvit*, known as Bhakti-devī, removes all desires and aspirations except for the service of Bhagavān. After all ignorance is dispelled, the *jīva's* gross and subtle coverings are both destroyed by the *vidyā-vṛtti*, the function of the knowledge potency. At once the *jīva's* pure, constitutional, transcendental body appears. Those who are eligible to taste *madhura-rasa* attain the purely spiritual body of a *gopī*.'

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"Now it is necessary to reconcile two considerations. In *Śrī Prema-bhakti-candrikā* we read: '*sādhane bhābibe jāhā siddha-dehe pāba tāhā* – Whatever one contemplates during the practice of devotional service will certainly be achieved upon attaining one's perfected spiritual body.' *Hari-bhakti-sudhodaya* (8.51) states: '*yasya yat-saṅgatiḥ puṁso maṇivat syāt sa tad gunaḥ* – According to the living entity's association, he takes on certain qualities, just like a jewel reflects those objects close to it.' This does not mean that the *svarūpa* of the *jīva* is like spotlessly clear crystal and that his *siddha-svarūpa* appears according to association. Rather, when the conditioned soul performs the activities of *śuddha-bhakti* such as hearing and chanting in the association of a pure bona fide *guru* and Vaiṣṇavas, the contamination of ignorance, *anarthas* and so on is cleared by the influence of that *svarūpa-siddha-bhakti*, and a semblance, an *ābhāsa*, of the natural characteristics of the soul begins to manifest.

"Only for such a *sādhaka* has Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī given the instruction to associate with Vaiṣṇavas who are *svajātīya-āsaya-snigdha* – who are affectionately disposed (*snigdha*) towards one, and who are *svajātiya-āsaya*, established in the same mood of loving service for which one aspires. At that time, the *dīkṣā-guru*, *śravaṇa-guru* or *śikṣā-guru* sees the *sādhaka's* internal characteristics and, for his advancement on the path of *bhajana*, gives the *ekādaśa-bhāvas*, the eleven features of the *svarūpa*, as expounded in *śrī rāgānuga-mārga*. In this way the *sādhaka* performs *bhāva-bhajana* by this internally conceived *siddha-deha* to bring about the manifestation of his *siddha-svarūpa*. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (7.1.28) illustrates this point with an apt example:

kīṭaḥ peśaskṛtā ruddhaḥ
kuḍyāyāṁ tam anusmaran
saṁrambha-bhaya-yogena
vindate tat-svarūpatām

A wasp will forcibly confine a caterpillar to his hole in a wall. Overwhelmed with fear, the caterpillar continuously thinks of the wasp and thereby transforms into a wasp.

"The same principle applies in relation to the *rāgānuga-bhakti sādhakas*. At the time of *sādhana*, they go on continuously thinking about serving Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His pastime associates in their internally conceived bodies. Thus they also become totally absorbed. Finally, giving up their gross and subtle material bodies, they take a birth in Vraja that corresponds to their internally conceived *siddha-deha*, and attain the very same service that they were previously contemplating.

"Thus the constitutional appearance, name and mood of the *jīva* are present even in the conditioned stage, during which time it remains unmanifest. That *svarūpa* is simply manifested by the mercy of *svarūpa-śakti*, and specifically by the action of the essence of *hlādinī* and *saṁvit*. *Nitya-siddhasya bhāvasya prākaṭyaṁ hṛdi sādhyatā* (*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.2.2). It is not that *sādhana* produces something entirely new. Rather, *sādhana* is performed exclusively to bring about the manifestation of that eternally perfect *bhāva* which is intrinsic to the *svarūpa* of the *jīva*."

The assembled Vaiṣṇavas were extremely delighted to hear such an elaborate presentation. Śrīpāda Hṛṣikeśa Mahārāja especially expressed his gratitude and said, "I am eternally indebted to you because today you have dispelled a doubt that I have harboured for a long time."

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Pāñcarātrika guru-paramparā and bhāgavata-paramparā

Nowadays, people are constantly concocting new objections to the lineage being presented by the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya* as their authentic *guru-paramparā*. Some believe that since Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa was initiated into the Madhva *sampradāya*, he was not actually a Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava. They assert that, although he had the association of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, the influence of the Madhva *sampradāya* was strong. In his own writings, he stubbornly included Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya* as part of the Madhva *sampradāya*. Therefore, they conclude that Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa cannot be accepted as an *ācārya* of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya*.

Another group of ignorant people say that *jagad-guru* Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda created a completely new concept which he called the *bhāgavata-paramparā*[1]. According to them, he has explained in this supposedly new doctrine that Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura is a disciple of *vaiṣṇava-sārvabhauma* Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja, and that Śrī Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja is a disciple of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. Some so-called Vaiṣṇavas (*sahajiyās*) also present the doubt that Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's *guru-paramparā* cannot be considered bona fide because he conferred the renounced order (*sannyāsa*) upon himself. *Paramārādhya* Śrīla Gurudeva shattered all these accusations with powerful logic and solid scriptural evidence. His analysis of the subject is presented below.

The disciples and grand-disciples of Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda are currently preaching Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's pure *kṛṣṇa-bhakti* and *śrī harināma* throughout the world. Because they have preached so extensively, in prominent countries such as America, England, France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, Canada, Australia, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore, the streets and avenues in every city – and even in every town and village – are resounding with the holy name, and young men and women are very enthusiastically applying themselves to the cultivation of pure *bhakti*. They are meeting Vaiṣṇavas from India, and performing *harināma-saṅkīrtana* and preaching pure *bhakti* with them. A few ignorant, so-called Vaiṣṇavas of the *sahajiyā* community are agitated by this and are trying to mislead the common people by presenting fraudulent accusations against the Sārasvata Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava lineage. Śrīla Gurudeva has established the rational and perfect conclusion on this matter in his essay entitled *Gauḍīya Vedāntācārya Śrī Baladeva*. Here, we present some extracts from that essay.

The guru-paramparā of the commentator [Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa]

The historical truth regarding the *guru-paramparā* of the commentator, Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, is as follows. He first acquired specific expertise in the *bhakti-śāstra* under the guidance of Pītāmbara dāsa, the crest jewel of renounced *sādhus*. After that, he accepted *pāñcarātrikī-dīkṣā* from a Vaiṣṇava named Śrī Rādhā-Dāmodara dāsa, who appeared in a dynasty of Kānya-kubjīya *brāhmaṇas*. Rādhā-Dāmodara dāsa, the grandson of Rasikānanda Murāri, accepted *dīkṣā* from another Kānya-kubjīya *brāhmaṇa*, Śrī Nayanānanda-deva Gosvāmī.

1 Editor: the succession of bona fide *gurus* rooted in receiving and following transcendental instructions from their predecessors

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Rasikānanda Prabhu, a disciple of Śrī Śyāmānanda Prabhu, is the fourth *guru* before the commentator Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣana in the *pāñcarātrika guru-paramparā*[2], and his son was the aforementioned Nayanānanda-deva Gosvāmī. The *guru* of Śrī Śyāmānanda was Śrī Hṛdaya-caitanya, whose *guru* was Gaurīdāsa Paṇḍita upon whom Śrīman Nityānanda Prabhu bestowed His mercy. Even though Śyāmānanda Prabhu was a disciple of *ācārya* Hṛdaya-caitanya, he afterwards accepted discipleship under Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī. Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī was a disciple of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, who was a disciple of Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī, and Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī was a follower and associate of Śrīman Mahāprabhu.

The śiṣya-paramparā of Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa

We have given an account of the *pāñcarātrika-paramparā* from Śrīman Mahāprabhu down to Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa. Now we will give an account of his *śiṣya-paramparā*. Śrī Uddhara dāsa, referred to in some places as Uddhava dāsa, was a disciple of the commentator Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa. Some think that these are two different people, but in any case Uddhava dāsa had a disciple named Śrī Madhusūdana dāsa. Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī was a disciple of this very Śrī Madhusūdana dāsa. Previously, as *vaiṣṇava-sārvabhauma*, or the prominent leader of the Vaiṣṇava community in Mathurā-maṇḍala, Kṣetra-maṇḍala and Gauḍa-maṇḍala, he became famous by the name of Siddha Jagannātha dāsa. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura accepted this very Siddha Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja as his *bhajana-śikṣā-guru*, in accordance with the system of *bhāgavata-paramparā*. It was under the direction of *vaiṣṇava-sārvabhauma* Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja that Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura discovered the birthplace of Śrīman Mahāprabhu at Śrī Dhāma Māyāpura. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was the *śikṣā-guru*, or *bhajana-guru*, of Śrīla Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja. Śrīla Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja accepted my *gurupāda-padma, oṁ viṣṇupāda aṣṭottara-śata* Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda, as his disciple and gave him the *dīkṣā-mantras* and so on. Whoever is unable to accept this *paramparā* is to be counted amongst one of the thirteen types of *apasampradāyas* mentioned in writing by Śrī Totarāma Bābājī Mahārāja. Alternatively, he may be regarded as the creator of a fourteenth *apasampradāya*.

Pāñcarātrika-paramparā and bhāgavata-paramparā

From this *guru-paramparā* we can easily understand that Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa is a follower of Śrīman Mahāprabhu within the spiritual family lineage (*parivāra*) of Śrī Śyāmānanda Prabhu. Śrī Śyāmānanda accepted the guidance of Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī, and because Jīva Gosvāmī is exclusively *rūpānuga*, a follower of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, it therefore follows that Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa is also a *rūpānuga* Vaiṣṇava. There are those who acknowledge that Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa is in the line of Śrī Śyāmānanda, and yet deny that he is a *rūpānuga* Vaiṣṇava, and therefore not qualified for the topmost service mood of *unnata-ujjvala-rasa*. Such people are certainly only deluded offenders. Although Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa accepted *pāñcarātrikī-dīkṣā* from Śrī Rādhā-Dāmodara dāsa, he also accepted instructions in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and the literature of the Gosvāmīs.

The system of *bhāgavata-paramparā* is superior to that of *pāñcarātrika-paramparā*, and is founded on the degree of proficiency

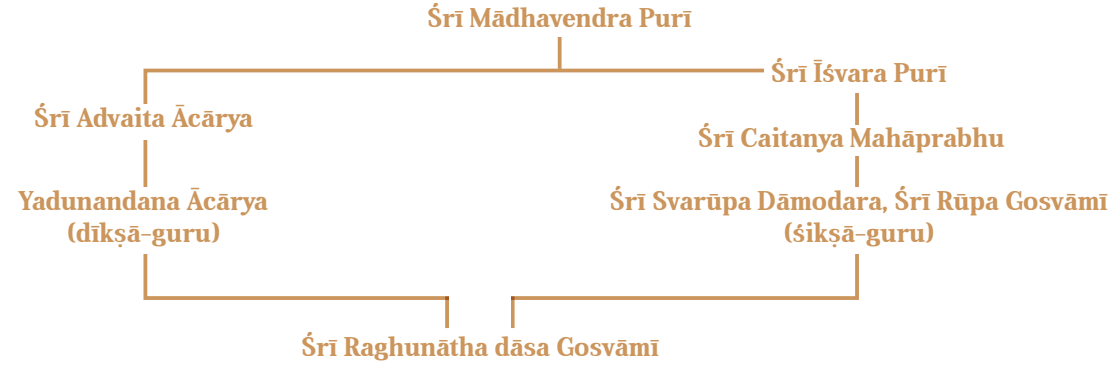
2 Editor: the disciplic line based on receiving formal *mantras*

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in *bhajana* (*bhajana-niṣṭhā*). The charm and superiority of *bhāgavata-paramparā* is that *pāñcarātrika-paramparā* is included within it. In *bhāgavata-paramparā* there is no obstruction in regard to time. From the viewpoint of pure *bhakti*, the doctrines of *pāñcarātrika* and of *bhāgavata* both explain the same teachings with the same objective. In *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Madhya-līlā* 19.169) it is said, "*pañcarātre, bhāgavate ei lakṣaṇa kaya* – these symptoms are described in Vedic literatures such as the Pañcarātras and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*." The *prākṛta-sahajiyā sampradāya*, while claiming to be followers of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, accumulate offences to the lotus feet of Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī. Similarly, nowadays the *jāti-gosvāmīs* and those who accept their remnants and follow in their footsteps – such as several members of the *sahajiyā*, *kartābhajā*, *kiśorībhajā* and *bhajanākhājā sampradāyas* – proudly conceive of themselves as followers of Cakravartī Ṭhākura, but cast calumnies against the commentator Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa. In this way, they are growing excessively hateful and progressing towards hell.

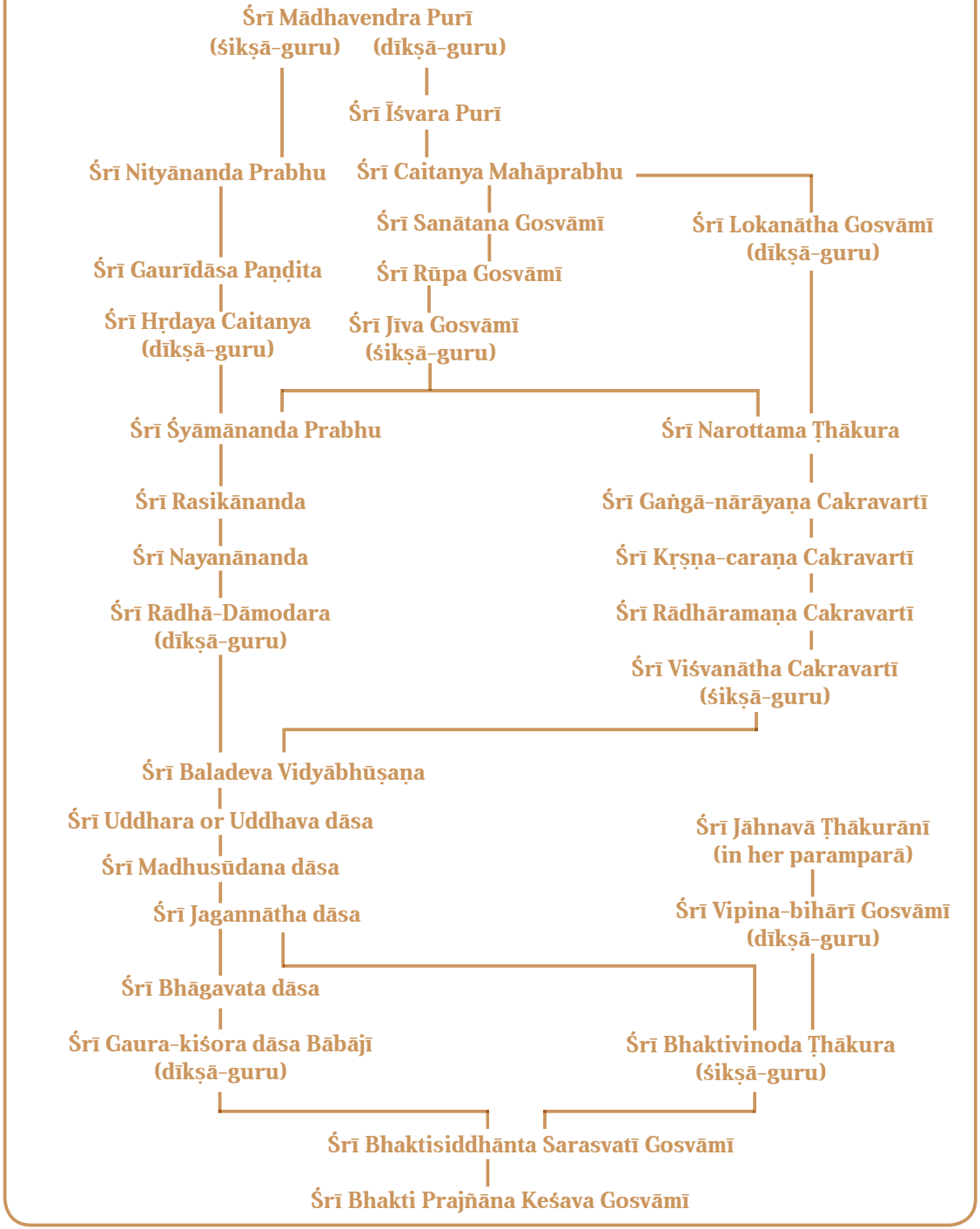
Both diagrams are of the *pāñcarātrika guru-paramparā* and the *bhāgavata-paramparā*. It will enable readers to properly appreciate the speciality of *bhāgavata-paramparā*, and also understand how *pāñcarātrika guru-paramparā* is included within it. With the aid of these diagrams, we will give an account of the *pāñcarātrika guru-paramparā* and *bhāgavata-paramparā* of Śrī Śyāmānanda Prabhu, Śrī Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura, Śrī Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and other Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas*.

Śrī Śyāmānanda Prabhu: In *pāñcarātrika guru-paramparā* Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu's disciple is Gaurīdāsa Paṇḍita, and his disciple Hṛdaya-caitanya is the *dīkṣā-guru* of Śrī Śyāmānanda Prabhu. In *bhāgavata-paramparā* Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's disciple is Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī, the disciple of Sanātana is Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, and Rūpa's disciple is Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī. Śrī Śyāmānanda Prabhu is the *śikṣā* disciple of this same Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī. It is no exaggeration to say that Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī was superior to Śrī Hṛdaya-caitanya in *tattva*, *rasa*, *bhajana* and indeed in all respects. For this reason, Śrī Hṛdaya-caitanya personally sent Śrī Śyāmānanda Prabhu to Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī for advanced instruction in the practice of *bhajana*, and Śrī Śyāmānanda Prabhu accepted the guidance of Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī. Thus the serious question which deserves our consideration here is this: which is superior – *pāñcarātrika guru-paramparā* or *bhāgavata-paramparā*?



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Pāñcarātrika guru-paramparā and bhāgavata-paramparā



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Śrī Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura: According to the *pāñcarātrika guru-paramparā*, Śrī Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura's *guru* is Śrī Lokanātha dāsa Gosvāmī. However, there is no record anywhere of Śrī Lokanātha dāsa Gosvāmī's *pāñcarātrika dīkṣā-guru*. Texts such as *Śrī Gauḍīya-vaiṣṇava-abhidhāna* have stated that Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu is Śrī Lokanātha dāsa Gosvāmī's *guru*, but it is a well-known fact that Śrīman Mahāprabhu did not accept anyone as His disciple according to the *pāñcarātrika* method. That means that if Śrīman Mahāprabhu is actually the *guru* of Śrī Lokanātha Gosvāmī, it is only on the basis of *bhāgavata-paramparā*. In any case, Śrī Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura, besides being the *pāñcarātrika* disciple of Śrī Lokanātha Gosvāmī, is also the disciple of Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī in the *bhāgavata-paramparā*. It was under the guidance of Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī that Śrī Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura became steeped in *bhajana-śikṣā*.

Śrī Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī: In the *pāñcarātrika-paramparā*, Śrī Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī is the disciple of Śrī Yadunandana Ācārya, who is situated in the *pāñcarātrika* branch of Śrī Advaita Ācārya. However, if we deeply consider Śrī Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī's life history from another viewpoint, we find the very clear and indelible influence of the *bhajana-śikṣā* of Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara and Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, who are his *gurus* in the *bhāgavata-paramparā*. Here, too, if we compare *pāñcarātrika-paramparā* with *bhāgavata-paramparā*, we find that the superiority of the *bhāgavata-paramparā* shines as radiantly as the sun.

Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa: According to the *pāñcarātrika guru-paramparā*, Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa is a *pāñcarātrika* disciple of Śrī Rādhā-Dāmodara in the line of Śrī Śyāmānanda Prabhu. At the same time, in *bhāgavata-paramparā* he is a disciple of Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, under whom he studied *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and all the various Gosvāmī literatures, and from whom he received advanced instruction in *bhajana*. Śrī Rādhā-Dāmodara himself sent Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa to Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura. The guidance of Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura in the life of Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa is widely known. Only under this guidance did he defeat the Śrī *sampradāya* Vaiṣṇavas at Galtā-gaddī and kept intact the service and worship of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govindajī. It was after attaining the mercy of Śrī Govindadeva, Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī's worshipful deity, that Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa composed *Śrī Govinda-bhāṣya*. There is no doubt about Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa being a *rūpānuga* Vaiṣṇava, because he is under the guidance of Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, who is himself most assuredly a *rūpānuga* Vaiṣṇava. Furthermore, it is a well-known fact that Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa attained the mercy of Śrī Govindadeva, the treasured life-breath of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, and ensured the continuation of service to Him. From this perspective, also, since he attained the mercy of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī and his worshipful Lord, Śrī Govindajī, what doubt could possibly remain about his being a *rūpānuga* Vaiṣṇava?

Śrī Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura: According to the *pāñcarātrika guru-paramparā*, the *dīkṣā-guru* of Śrī Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura is Śrī Vipina-bihārī Gosvāmī, who comes in the *pāñcarātrika-paramparā* of Śrī Jāhnavā Ṭhākurānī. From another viewpoint, *vaiṣṇava-sārvabhauma* Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja is the *bhajana-śikṣā-guru* of Śrī Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura in *bhāgavata-paramparā*. *Vaiṣṇava-sārvabhauma* Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja is a

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disciple of the famous Madhusūdana dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja in the *paramparā* of Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa. It is not even necessary to say that *vaiṣṇava-sārvabhauma* Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja is superior to Śrī Vipina-bihārī Gosvāmī in *tattva-jñāna, bhajana-śikṣā*, etc. No one can deny that Śrī Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's life is imprinted with the stamp of Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja's guidance.

Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura: According to the *pāñcarātrika guru-paramparā* Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's *dīkṣā-guru* is Śrī Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja, who descends from Śrī Jāhnavā Ṭhākurānī in the *pāñcarātrika guru-paramparā*. Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja accepted the attire of a renunciant from a disciple of *vaiṣṇava-sārvabhauma* Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja named Śrī Bhāgavata dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja. Thus by *bhāgavata-paramparā*, Śrī Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja is in the branch of Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja. According to this analysis, by *pāñcarātrika-paramparā* Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura is in the *paramparā* of Śrī Jāhnavā Ṭhākurānī, and in *bhāgavata-paramparā* he has been connected with Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja.

It is clear from Śrīla Sarasvatī Prabhupāda's life history that Śrī Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's practices, precepts and *bhajana-praṇālī* were his very life and soul, and that he made the fulfilment of the Ṭhākura's aspirations the sole aim and object of his life. Thus his *guru* in *bhāgavata-paramparā* was Śrī Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, whose *guru* was Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja. Therefore, there is not even the slightest justification to point a finger at the *guru-paramparā* of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, the founder-*ācārya* of the Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha.

Several additional facts are worthy of our consideration on the subject of *pāñcarātrika guru-paramparā* and *bhāgavata-paramparā:*

(1) If a *pāñcarātrika dīkṣā-guru* in his constitutional spiritual form (*siddha-svarūpa*) is situated in a *rasa* that is lower than that of his disciple, how can he give *bhajana-śikṣā* pertaining to the more elevated *rasa*? In this situation, the disciple must go elsewhere and take shelter of a Vaiṣṇava who is qualified to give the appropriate superior guidance. For example, Śrī Hṛdaya-caitanya is an associate in *sakhya-rasa* in *kṛṣṇa-līlā*, whereas his disciple Śrī Śyāmānanda Prabhu (Duḥkhī-Kṛṣṇa dāsa) is an associate in *madhura-rasa*. Therefore Śrī Hṛdaya-caitanya personally sent Duḥkhī-Kṛṣṇa dāsa to Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī to receive higher *bhajana-śikṣā* in *madhura-rasa*.

(2) It may happen that *guru* and disciple in *pāñcarātrika guru-paramparā* are in the same *rasa*, but that the *guru* is not as highly qualified as the disciple. Under such circumstances, the disciple must go and take shelter of an *uttama* Vaiṣṇava for higher *bhajana-śikṣā*, and this Vaiṣṇava will be called his *guru* in *bhāgavata-paramparā*.

We can see from these two considerations that the *pāñcarātrika* process has some inherent defects, whereas the *bhāgavata-paramparā* is completely free from these defects, and is flawless in all respects.

(3) All members of the Gauḍīya *sampradāya* accept Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu as *jagad-guru*, and consider themselves to be His followers. However, on what basis do they maintain this conviction? There is no recorded account anywhere of Śrīman Mahāprabhu giving *dīkṣā-mantra* to anyone. This means that Śrīman Mahāprabhu is not anyone's *guru* in the *pāñcarātrika-paramparā*, although He Himself

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is a disciple of Śrī Īśvara Purī. Therefore, if the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava community accepts the guidance and discipleship of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, it can only be on one basis, and that basis is *bhāgavata-paramparā*.

(4) Each and every Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava is proud to call himself *rūpānuga*. But the point to consider is this: how many disciples did Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī initiate by the *pāñcarātrika* method? The fact is that Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī is his one and only *dīkṣā* disciple, and Śrī Rūpa is not actually a *dīkṣā* disciple of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. So on what basis do members of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava community accept Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī as their *guru*? How is it possible to be a follower of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī and at the same time a follower of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu? Even Sanātana Gosvāmī, who is the *śikṣā-guru* of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, has not a second thought about calling himself *rūpānuga*. The basis of all these examples is one – *bhāgavata-paramparā*. It is only on the basis of *bhāgavata-paramparā* that Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī is the disciple of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and that the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava community considers Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī to be their *guru*.

Who is the *pāñcarātrika dīkṣā-guru* of Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī? We cannot say, because he has not mentioned the name of his *pāñcarātrika dīkṣā-guru* in any of his writings, but he has named his *śikṣā-gurus* in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Ādi-līlā* 1.37):

> *ei chaya guru—śikṣā-guru ye āmāra*
> *tāṅ'-sabāra pāda-padme koṭi namaskāra*
>
> These six *gurus* [the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana] are my *śikṣā-gurus* and I offer countless obeisances at their lotus feet.

At the end of each chapter of *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* he has written:

"It is only on the basis of *bhāgavata-paramparā* that Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī is the disciple of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and that the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava community considers Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī to be their *guru*."

> *śrī-rūpa-raghunātha-pade yāra āśa*
> *caitanya-caritāmṛta kahe kṛṣṇadāsa*
>
> Praying at the lotus feet of Śrī Rūpa and Śrī Raghunātha, always desiring their mercy, I, Kṛṣṇadāsa, narrate *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, following in their footsteps. *

In these statements he has specifically accepted Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī and Śrī Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī as his *śikṣā-gurus* on the basis of *bhāgavata guru-paramparā*.

From these facts it becomes thoroughly obvious that the *bhāgavata-paramparā*, which includes *pāñcarātrika-paramparā*, always shines forth brilliantly. Those who ignore these facts and who cast aspersions on the *guru-praṇālī* of Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, doubting that they are *rūpānuga* Vaiṣṇavas, are certainly staunch opponents of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and secret agents of Kali.

Thus, whatever opinion *paramārādhyatama* Śrīla Ācārya Kesarī has written on the subject of the *guru-praṇālī* of Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, and also in regard to *pāñcarātrika guru-paramparā* and *bhāgavata-paramparā*, is both logical and fully in agreement with the established conclusions of the scriptures.

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The rasika and bhāvuka bhāgavata

Paramārādhyatama Śrīla Gurudeva was profoundly grave and sometimes harder than a thunderbolt, but he was also softer than a flower. He was highly expert in tasting spiritual mellows (*rasika*) and always deeply immersed in ecstatic sentiments (*bhāvuka*). He was harder than a thunderbolt towards those who were opposed to *bhakti*, such as the impersonal monists and the followers of pseudo-devotional sects, such as *smārtas, jāti-gosvāmīs, jāti-vaiṣṇavas* and *prākṛta-sahajiyās*. Yet to sincere godbrothers and disciples who were steadily engaged in *guru-sevā* without duplicity, he was much softer then a flower.

After Śrīla Prabhupāda's entrance into *aprakaṭa-līlā*, [Ananta Vāsudeva] Vidyābhuṣaṇa and [Sundarānanda] Vidyāvinoda were influenced by undesirable association and became staunch opponents of Śrīla Prabhupāda. Śrīla Gurudeva's blood brother Śrīmad Bhakti Kevala Auḍulomi Mahārāja followed in their footsteps, but Śrīla Gurudeva vehemently opposed their ideas. Although Śrīmad Auḍulomi Mahārāja was his brother and godbrother, Śrīla Gurudeva objected to his ideas without compromise and said, "I do not want to see the face of anyone who is opposed to Śrīla Gurupāda-padma. Auḍulomi Mahārāja is my brother from my previous *āśrama* and in spiritual life he is my godbrother. Even so, from now on I have no relationship or connection with him whatsoever."

Whenever anyone opposed *jagad-guru* Śrīla Siddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda's conceptions, Śrīla Gurudeva would smash their objections to pieces by the strength of undisputed logic and steadfast scriptural evidence.

We will now present a few examples of how he was also *bhāvuka* and *rasika*.

(a) During his manifest presence, Śrīla Guru Mahārāja used to go to Śrī Dhāma Māyāpura every year at the time of Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma *parikramā*. He would begin to describe the glories of his most worshipful *gurudeva* at the place of his *gurudeva's samādhi*, in the presence of thousands and thousands of faithful pilgrims. On recollecting Śrīla Prabhupāda's glorious and transcendental qualities, he would become so emotional that his throat would become choked, he would burst into tears, and all *aṣṭa-sāttvika bhāvas* would be clearly visible on his body. Incapable of speaking any further, he would somehow indicate that we should say something.

(b) Once Śrīla Gurudeva was sitting on the veranda of his *bhajana-kuṭī* at Śrī Uddhāraṇa Gauḍīya Maṭha in Chuṅchurā, chanting *hari-nāma*. A few *maṭhavāsīs* were sitting near him and he was explaining to us about the *madhura-bhakti* of Vraja. He said that only the *vraja-ramaṇīs* are actually associates (*parikāras*) of *madhura-rasa*, and they are all in *parakīya-bhāva*. Although there are many varieties of *vraja-ramaṇīs* – defined according to their different moods – still, they are all *parakīya-nāyikās* (paramour heroines) in *madhura-rasa*. The *mahiṣīs*, or queens, of Dvārakā-purī, Śrī Rāmacandrajī's wife Sītā-devī, and Mahā-lakṣmī of Vaikuṇṭha are not heroines in *madhura-rasa*. They are all maidservants in *dāsya-rasa*.

In the course of this explanation I [the author] posed a question: "*Rasācārya* Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has described three types of *nāyikās* in *Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi*, namely *sādhāraṇī*, *samañjasā* and *samarthā*. Kubjā of Mathurā is in the category of *sādhāraṇī*; the queens of Dvārakā such as Rukmiṇī and Satyabhāmā are known as

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samañjasā; and the *vraja-gopīs* are called *samarthā*. Among these heroines, the queens of Dvārakā have been called associates in the *svakīya* aspect of *madhura-rasa*, and the *vraja-ramaṇīs* have been called associates in the *parakīya* aspect of *madhura-rasa*. So what harm is there in accepting Sītā-devī and the queens of Dvārakā to be associates of *svakīya madhura-rasa*?"

Śrīla Gurudeva replied, "You do not have the capacity to assimilate these profound conceptions at present. This will not be accessible to you now, even if I tell you. Wherever there is affection imbued with *aiśvarya-bhāva*, a mood of awe and reverence, only *dāsya-prema* predominates. Pure *mādhurya-prema* is completely bereft of *aiśvarya-bhāva* and appears to resemble the love between bosom friends in this world (*laukika sadbandhu-vat*). The affection of Lakṣmī, Sītājī and the queens of Dvārakā for their respective *iṣṭadevas* is imbued with the highest *aiśvarya-bhāva*. They have no pure *mādhurya-prema* and are always in *sambhrama-bhāva*, a mood of awe and reverence. Thus, although the affection (*prīti*) of the *mahiṣīs* is somewhat more elevated than that of *dāsya-bhaktas* such as Hanumān, Arjuna and Uddhava, their *bhāva* cannot be called pure *mādhurya-bhāva*. Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī and Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura have presented a beautiful assessment of this subject in their respective commentaries.

"This is why *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* has emphasized the special importance of *gopī-prema*. Only when one has performed *bhajana* for some time under the guidance of pure Vaiṣṇavas can one realize these profound subject matters by their mercy."

(c) Once, during the month of Kārtika, Śrīla Gurupāda-padma had brought his noble presence to Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha. One day, he was sitting in his *bhajana-kuṭī* and chanting *harināma*, absorbed in transcendental emotions. I had sat down nearby and was silently reading the chapter on *śrī dāmodara-bandhana* from *Śrī Gopāla-campūḥ*. I became so attracted to Jīva Gosvāmī's ideas that I could not check myself. Taking the book in my hand, I came right in front of Śrīla Gurudeva and said, "In his time, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī was a great *mahāpuruṣa* with immense knowledge of all philosophical principles. Yet at the same time he was also a transcendental *rasika* poet. The combination of vast spiritual erudition with poetic artistry is extremely rare in this world. But when we read the episode of *dāmodara-bandhana-līlā* in *Gopāla-campūḥ*, we can see how Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī combined these two attributes in an astonishing way." Then I began to read aloud from *Gopāla-campūḥ* for Śrīla Gurudeva to hear:

> Yaśodā-maiyā ran very quickly after Bāla-kṛṣṇa, who had fled onto the main road. She caught Him with one hand, took a small stick in the other, and began to scold Him. "I'll give You such a beating! I know You go from house to house stealing. You are a thief (*cora*)!"
>
> Kṛṣṇa: O Maiyā, don't beat Me! No Cora[3] has ever appeared in My father's dynasty. They only appear in your father's dynasty. I'm not a thief.
>
> Maiyā (smiling): How was the churning pot of yoghurt broken, then?
>
> Kṛṣṇa: Well, that is the punishment given by the Supreme Lord.

3 Editor: In the dynasty of Śrī Yaśodā's father, there was a *gopa* named Cora Ghoṣa. The literal meaning of *cora* is 'thief'. Thus Śrī Kṛṣṇa denounced Śrī Yaśodā's dynasty, considering Himself to belong exclusively to His father's dynasty.

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Maiyā: And who fed the butter to the monkeys?

Kṛṣṇa: He who has made the monkeys feeds the monkeys.

Maiyā (angry, but laughing): Now tell me the truth. How did the butter pot break?

Kṛṣṇa (crying): You jumped up in a hurry to pacify the milk that was boiling over, and you were so flustered that your heavy anklets struck the pot and it broke. So tell Me, how am I to blame for this?

Maiyā: Okay. In that case, tell me how You come to have butter on Your face.

Kṛṣṇa: O Maiyā, every day a monkey comes and puts his hand in the pot to eat the butter, but today I caught him. He pulled out his hand and began to run away, but the butter on his hand got smeared on My face. Tell Me honestly, am I at fault in this? But still, you call Me a thief and want to beat Me.

Maiyā: O You who are the king of those skilled in argument! O friend of the monkeys! Now I shall punish You by binding You and Your ally, the grinding mortar, together.

After a great deal of endeavour, by the mercy of Bhagavān, she tied Kṛṣṇa to the grinding mortar and went inside to get on with her household duties. Dragging the grinding mortar with His little friends, Bāla-kṛṣṇa began to crawl through the gap between the twin *arjuna* trees, which stood before the entrance of the house. At the mere touch of the grinding mortar, both trees came crashing down with the most terrific thundering sound.

All the Vrajavāsīs, wherever they were, heard the sound and came running. Nanda Bābā and Yaśodā-maiyā also arrived there, and when Yaśodā-maiyā saw her son between the two fallen trees, she became speechless. Nanda Bābā was struck with wonder. He approached his son and took Him in his lap. Seeing His father, Kṛṣṇa began to weep loudly. Nanda Bābā gently caressed Kṛṣṇa's head and limbs with his hands. Patting Him and kissing His face he said, "*Lālā*, who bound you like this?" Kṛṣṇa was crying and did not answer. Nanda Bābā asked again and again. Finally, Kṛṣṇa whispered in Bābā's ear, "Maiyā did it." Nanda Bābā became very grave. "Maiyā did it? Your mother is so cruel!" He then fell silent.

Nanda Bābā then took both Kṛṣṇa and Baladāū in his arms and went to take bath in the Yamunā. He employed *brāhmaṇas* to recite auspicious *mantras* (*svasti-vācana*), distributed cows, etc. in charity, and then returned home. Somehow Rohiṇī-maiyā engaged some *gopīs* in cooking and serving food to Rāma, Kṛṣṇa and Nanda Bābā. After honouring *prasāda* in silence, Nanda Bābā went with his two sons to take his seat in the community council. In the evening, he came to the *gośālā* where he fed Kṛṣṇa and Baladeva with rock candy and squirted warm milk into Their mouths, directly from the udder of a cow until Their bellies were full.

When Vrajarāja had finished taking his evening meal in the company of his two sons, the older *gopīs* of the community all came before him, bringing Rohiṇījī with them. The two children were sitting in Bābā's lap.

Rohiṇījī said, "O King, Kṛṣṇa's mother has not taken her meal. She is sitting in a

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corner as silent as a stone. All the *gopīs* in the house are so sad. They are also sitting silently without eating or drinking."

With mixed feelings of sorrow and amusement, Vrajarāja said, "What can I do? She should realize that this is the fruit of anger."

Tears flowed from the eyes of the older *gopīs* as they said, "Oh, no, Yaśodā is so soft, inside and out. You should not call her cruel. It's not right to use a word like that for her."

Hearing this Vrajarāja became even more emotional. Smiling, he asked, "*Lālā*, will You go to Maiyā?"

"No, no! I will only stay with you," replied Kṛṣṇa.

Upānanda's wife laughed and said, "You may stay with Bābā, but who will breastfeed You?"

Kṛṣṇa: "Bābā will squirt warm milk into My mouth from the udder of the cows and feed Me *miśri*."

"Who will You play with?"

"I'll play with Father and My elder brother."

Vrajarāja said, "Why don't You go to Rohiṇī-maiyā?"

Kṛṣṇa sobbed and said angrily, "I was calling out to My elder Maiyā to save Me, but even she didn't come."

Hearing this, Rohiṇī-maiyā said softly with tears flowing down her face, "*Lālā*, don't be so cruel-hearted. Your mother is crying for You."

Kṛṣṇa's eyes, too, brimmed with tears when He heard this. He turned around and looked at His father. At the same time, Rohiṇī-maiyā gestured to Baladeva to bring Kṛṣṇa to His mother. Baladeva caught hold of Kṛṣṇa with both hands and began to drag Him towards Rohiṇī-maiyā, but Kṛṣṇa shook Him off with a jerk and wrapped His arms tightly around Bābā's neck. A shower of tears began to fall from Bābā's eyes as well. Raising his hands he said, "*Lālā*, should I slap Your mother?"

Bāla-kṛṣṇa could not tolerate this and caught hold of His father's hands tightly. At that moment, Bābā remembered the anguish within Yaśodā's heart, and said to Kṛṣṇa, "*Lālā*, what if Your mother should…" He paused and motioned with his hand, meaning "if she should die, then what will You do?"

As soon as He heard this, Kṛṣṇa loudly cried, "Maiyā! Maiyā! Maiyā!" He stretched out His arms in the direction of His elder mother [Rohiṇī-maiyā], and of His own accord He ran to sit on her lap.

Rohiṇī-maiyā was in tears. She picked up Kṛṣṇa, who was also crying, and entering the ladies' inner chamber of the house, she put Him down in Yaśodā-maiyā's lap. Yaśodā-maiyā covered Kṛṣṇa with her veil and began to weep like a *kurarī* bird. Kṛṣṇa, also, began to shed floods of tears. All the *gopīs* who had assembled in the ladies' quarters began to cry as well, and Nanda Bābā was crying in the meeting room. The whole atmosphere became submerged in *vātsalya-rasa*.

As soon as Śrīla Gurudeva heard this narration, he began weeping. An incessant flow of tears flowed from his eyes and other bodily transformations (*aṣṭa-sāttvika bhāvas*) were also clearly visible. I have only seen such an expression of extraordinary spiritual emotions once or twice in my life.

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Service to the sampradāya

Some time in 1956, Śrīla Gurudeva came to Mathurā to visit Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha. At that time, the followers of the Nimbārka *sampradāya* in Vṛndāvana were publishing a spiritual journal called *Śrī Sudarśana*. In one issue, they cast aspersions on Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, saying that He was a disciple of Keśava Kaśmīrī. In other issues they insolently dared to claim that Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* such as Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura were in the Nimbārka *sampradāya*. When I [the author] showed these issues to Śrīla Gurudeva, he became extremely angry and immediately had a short essay written for *Śrī Bhāgavata-patrikā*. The headline was 'Śrī Nimbāditya and Nimbārka are not the same person'. The gist of the essay is as follows:

"Nowhere in the scriptures is there any mention of a Nimbārka *sampradāya*. The Purāṇas mention a Vaiṣṇava *ācārya* called Śrī Nimbāditya, and the Catuḥsana (the four Kumāras) have accepted this Nimbāditya Ācārya as their *samprādaya-ācārya* in the age of Kali. However, Nimbārka Svāmī is a completely different person. Nimbāditya was a disciple of Nāradajī at the end of Dvāpara-yuga and the beginning of Kali-yuga, but Nimbārka Ācārya appeared much more recently. Great and eminent authors of bona fide scriptures, such as Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, have mentioned the names of the prominent *ācāryas* of all the other *sampradāyas*, but they have not mentioned the name of Nimbārka Ācārya anywhere.

"The Nimbārka *sampradāya* currently uses the *Pārijāta-bhāṣya*, which was written not by Nimbāditya Ācārya, but rather by two of his disciples Śrīnivāsa Ācārya and Keśava Kaśmīrī, who then presented it as having been written by their *guru*. The scriptures of the six Gosvāmīs mention the names of *ācāryas* such as Śrī Rāmānuja, Śrī Madhva, Śrī Viṣṇusvāmī, Śrī Nimbāditya and Śrī Vallabha Ācārya. If the Nimbārka *sampradāya* had existed even to a slight extent at that time, then they would most certainly have mentioned the name of Nimbārka Ācārya as well. None of the other *samprādaya ācāryas*, such as Śrī Rāmānuja, Śrī Madhva and Śrī Viṣṇusvāmī, have mentioned Nimbārka Ācārya's name in any of the scriptures that they have written."

When this essay appeared in *Śrī Bhāgavata-patrikā*, the publishers of the *Sudarśana* journal announced that they were making arrangements to prosecute for slander. Śrīla Gurudeva replied firmly, "We will prove each and every word that we have written on the basis of evidence supported by *śāstra*." When the prosecution party heard about Śrīla Gurudeva's immense scriptural knowledge and profound personality, they became absolutely silent, and from that day onward they did not dare to write any more nonsense.

On another occasion, followers of the *sahajiyās* of Bengal wrote essays rife with *apasiddhānta*, opposing Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta. Śrīla Gurudeva argued with them in a similar way, using sharp words. The opposition party actually filed a lawsuit in court against Śrīla Gurudeva and other devotees, including the editor of *Śrī Gauḍīya-patrikā*. However, when they were faced with Śrīla Gurudeva's train of thought, they also had to bow their heads in defeat. They begged him for forgiveness in the court and thereafter avoided him. For these reasons, *oṁ viṣṇupāda* Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Sāraṅga Gosvāmī Mahārāja, who was Śrīla Gurudeva's dear godbrother and a leader of the Gauḍīya community, decorated Śrīla Gurupāda-padma with the title '*pāṣaṇḍa-gajaika-siṁha* – the lion who vanquishes the elephants of heresy'.

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The distinction between the smārta and Vaiṣṇava conceptions

In the sub-division Māthābhāṅga in West Bengal's Kūchibihāra district there lived a *gṛhastha* Vaiṣṇava named Śrī Nitya-gaura dāsa Adhikārī, who was initiated into the *kṛṣṇa-mantra* by *jagad-guru* Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja. Once, when one of his family members died, he followed *vaiṣṇava-sadācāra*, the approved Vaiṣṇava custom, and did not observe the non-Vaiṣṇava *smārta* regulations concerning impurity. Instead, he went on reading and teaching *bhakti* literature, such as *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, and chanting *harināma*. After twelve days, he invited the Vaiṣṇavas of the *maṭha* to his home. At that time, following the injunctions of the *vaiṣṇava-smṛti-śāstras*, *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* and *Sat-kriyā-sāra-dīpikā*, he offered the *prasāda* grain remnants of Viṣṇu to the soul of the deceased relative. He also requested the Vaiṣṇavas to perform the *vaiṣṇava-homa* for the sake of the ultimate transcendental auspiciousness of the deceased. *Mahā-prasāda* was then distributed to all the assembled Vaiṣṇavas.

The other members of his community, who were not Vaiṣṇavas, particularly emphasized the performance of *śrāddha*, a ceremony for the benefit of a deceased relative, according to the *smārta* conceptions of Raghunandana, prevalent in the *smārta* community of Bengal. They were not at all satisfied with Nitya-gaura Prabhu's Vaiṣṇava *śrāddha* and boycotted the ceremony altogether. Despite this, Nitya-gaura Prabhu was so steadfast in *vaiṣṇava-sadācāra* that he neglected the orders and directives of the village society. The villagers then became extremely angry with him. They stopped the barber, the washerman and others from going to his house; they severed all social connections with him, like eating, drinking and meeting with him; and they even prohibited him from drawing water from the same well. Nitya-gaura Prabhu became acutely intimidated by this oppressive social harassment and sent a letter to Gurudeva, informing him how the community was atrociously tyrannizing him. At that time, Śrīla Gurudeva was at Śrī Uddhāraṇa Gauḍīya Maṭha in Chuṅchurā. As soon as he received the letter, he immediately wrote back. The essence of his reply is given here.

Dear Nitya-gaura,

I have received your letter informing me of the outrageous transgressions committed by the *smārta* community. There is no need to be afraid in the slightest. The community in your village is utterly fallen, and they have no knowledge of what is referred to as *asauca*, or impure. They do not have any *sādhu-saṅga*, and consequently they do not have even the slightest understanding of proper etiquette given in *śāstra*. These people are constantly absorbed in nothing but the five 'm's' – *madya*, *māṁsa*, *matsya*, *mudrā* and *maithuna* (wine, meat, fish, money and sex). They eat abominable foodstuffs like onion, garlic and eggs and they are always drinking tea and *bhāṅga*, and smoking tobacco and *gāñjā*. This means that they are low-class people immersed in the modes of passion and ignorance. Such people are in the majority these days; there are very few saintly people established in proper behaviour and knowledge of the fundamental truths. Since misbehaved, low-class people are in the majority, they commit atrocities against the moral minority. I will

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give a simple example to illustrate what I mean by this.

There was one village where everyone was addicted to *gāñjā*. There was no one – young, old, man or woman – who did not take it, with the sole exception of a small child in one particular family. This boy had abstained from *gāñjā* from an early age, and as soon as he smelled the rank fumes of *gāñjā*, he would flee far away from there. As he grew older, his mother and father, relatives and community members tried in various ways to make him smoke *gāñjā*, but he would never yield. His parents and all the villagers were struck with wonder to see this boy's nature. In the end, they came to the conclusion that he must be afflicted by some terrible disease, and they called the village doctor to arrange for some compulsory medical treatment.

This is the deplorable condition of our village societies today. They cannot tolerate anyone performing *bhagavad-bhajana* and practising saintly behaviour. They inflict inhumane atrocities on those who do, and even expel them from the village. Such low-class people are in the majority, and that is why they commit various types of grievous offences against the moral minority.

Śrīla Gurudeva continued:

Nitya-gaura, are there no educated, well-behaved, persons in the mood of goodness in your village? If there are, then show them my letter. I am firmly convinced that the modes of passion and ignorance will always be defeated. Victory always belongs to the mode of goodness, even if it seems slow in coming. Demonic people may appear to be strong in the beginning, but they are defeated in the end. In ancient times, those who adhered to demonic ideologies were always defeated in the struggles between the demigods and the demons, in the war between Rāma and Rāvaṇa, and in the conflict between the Pāṇḍavas and the Kauravas. Hiraṇyakaśipu was immensely powerful but he could not stand before his five-year-old devotee son Prahlāda, and Bhagavān Nṛsiṁhadeva annihilated him in a second. Always chant *harināma*. You are always pure. Bhagavān Nṛsiṁhadeva will protect you.

You should always remember that the Vaiṣṇavas and devotees of Bhagavān are unfailingly pure. Impurity never touches them, even during birth and death. What to speak of Vaiṣṇavas, anyone who takes shelter of *harināma* is relieved of the reactions of all past, present and future sinful activities, even if they have murdered their parents, committed adultery or perpetrated the most grievous sins. It is quite clear in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* that when the greatly sinful Ajāmila called out the name Nārāyaṇa at the time of death, he was calling his son. Therefore, this was *nāmābhāsa*, not *śuddha-nāma*. Even so, Ajāmila's sinful reactions were all dispelled simply by the influence of this *nāmābhāsa*. Death retreated from him, and afterwards, when he chanted pure *harināma* in the association of saintly persons, he attained Vaikuṇṭha as his destination.

You are eternally pure, because you have taken shelter of *harināma* and you are always observing the limbs of *bhakti*. It is not necessary for you to observe any regulations at all for so-called impurity due

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to a death in the family. Those who are not initiated into the *viṣṇu-mantra* and who do not chant the name of Bhagavān are impure throughout their whole lives and observe lifelong impurity. They have no right to enter the temples of Hari.

The preaching of *smārta* Raghunandana's *smṛti* (named *Aṣṭāviṁśati-tattva*) is limited only to Bengal. Throughout the rest of India, people use the *vaiṣṇava-smṛtis* called *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* and *Sat-kriyā-sāra-dīpika*. These *vaiṣṇava-smṛtis* have been prevalent in Bihar, Orissa, Uttara Pradesh and elsewhere for approximately five hundred years. *Aṣṭaviṁśati-tattva* has only been popular for two hundred and fifty years.

There are many defects in Raghunandana's *smṛti*. For instance, no one, even those who have taken birth in a *brāhmaṇa* family can ever be pure throughout their whole life. According to Raghunandana, when anyone appears in a household of *brāhmaṇas*, seven generations of ancestors in the dynasties of both the mother and the father become untouchable for ten days. Similarly, seven generations of the dynasties of both the father and the mother, whether male or female, become untouchable for ten days when anyone dies. Now, the number of present-day descendants of ancestors from seven previous generations will be very large, and if any birth or death takes place in this vast population, then the complete dynasty is supposed to become untouchable. That means that if just thirty-six births or deaths occur in one year among this huge number of people, then their whole year will be spent in an impure condition. According to this doctrine, they can never be pure at any time in their lives and there are no means by which they can become purified again. If it supposed that they become purified by the recitation of *mantras* at the time of the *śrāddha* ceremony, then how do they become impure again? A *brāhmaṇa* daily chants the *gāyātrī-mantra* at the three junctions (*sandhyas*) of the day. Is the *gāyātrī-mantra* not capable of purifying him? Obviously, they have no faith in the potency of the *mantra*. Their conceptions are all erroneous and contrary to *śāstra*.

It is necessary to say something further on the subject of *smārta-brāhmaṇas*. One who knows the *smṛti-śāstras* is called *smārta*, as are his followers. There are two types of *smṛti-śāstra*: *laukika*, or worldly, and *pāramārthika*, or transcendental. The principal subject matter established by the Vedas, Upaniṣads and Purāṇas is *bhagavad-bhakti*, and those *smṛti-śāstras* that describe the rules and regulations of *bhagavad-bhakti* are called *pāramārthika-smṛti*. Those *smṛti-śāstras* which neglect this confidential purport of the Vedas and instead emphasize the rules and regulations for maintaining the gross social shackles are called *laukika smṛti-śāstra*.

Smṛti is basically one, but there are divisions of Smṛti because of the differences between those sages who are inclined to the service of Bhagavān and those sages who are averse. The brahminical nature of worldly *brāhmaṇas* who only follow *laukika smṛtis* is not perfect. Birth in a *brāhmaṇa* dynasty is not enough in itself, because one who performs no brahminical activities and has no brahminical qualities is not a

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brāhmaṇa, even if he happens to have taken birth in a dynasty of *brāhmaṇas*. One's social caste – whether *brāhmaṇa*, non-*brāhmaṇa* or untouchable – is determined by one's qualities and activities. This subject is completely clear in authoritative *śāstras* such as *Gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

cātur-varṇyaṁ mayā sṛṣṭaṁ
guṇa-karma vibhāgaśaḥ

Bhagavad-gītā (4.13)

The fourfold system of *varṇas* was created by Me according to divisions of quality (*guṇa*) and work (*karma*).

yasya yal lakṣaṇaṁ proktaṁ
puṁso varṇābhivyañjakam

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (7.11.35)

If one exhibits the characteristic symptoms of a *brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya* or *śūdra*, he should be accepted as a member of that *varṇa*, even if he has taken birth in another.

Now suppose someone performs a *śrāddha* ceremony by engaging a priest who may have taken birth in a dynasty of *brāhmaṇas* but who is averse to Bhagavān and has the temperament of a demon. Then that *śrāddha* ceremony will also be demonic. Can there be any doubt about this? The performance of such a *śrāddha* can bring no auspiciousness whatsoever to the soul of a deceased person. The atheistic villagers and *laukika smārta-brāhmaṇas* who are averse to Hari may follow this supposed observance of impurity. However, people who are initiated into the *viṣṇu-mantra* and who are established in *vaiṣṇava-sadācāra* will never follow it. You, your wife and your children are householders who are established in *vaiṣṇava-sadācāra* and initiated into the *viṣṇu-mantra*. Therefore you are always pure. You should never associate with fallen people, otherwise you will also become fallen. I never approve of heretical doctrines. That village community which is bereft of proper conduct is composed of common people, not the Supreme Lord. You should stay on the path of *bhakti* with very firm resolve and not be slightly fearful. There is another matter which should be properly understood. It is forbidden in all respects for pure Vaiṣṇavas to do *kuśa-dhāraṇa* and *nāndīmukha-śrāddha*. The meaning of the word *śrāddha* comes from *śraddhā* (faith) – *śraddhā hetutvenāstyasya aṇ*. The word *śrāddha* can only properly refer to those activities that are performed with *śraddhā* towards Hari, Guru and Vaiṣṇavas. According to the *smārtas*, everyone becomes a ghost in his next life, even those who are greatly dedicated to religion (*dharmātmās*) and have taken shelter of *harināma*. On the basis of this notion, *smārta* priests make everyone call out the *mantra*, "*ete preta-tarpaṇa-kāle bhavanti iha* – may the ghost be present here and accept this *piṇḍa*." Here the belief is that although one's mother or father or anyone else may have engaged in *bhagavad-bhajana* throughout their entire life and always have adhered to pure conduct, as soon as they died they became ghosts. Then at the time of *śrāddha* they are offered *piṇḍa* composed of meat, fish, burnt bananas and rice and they are addressed, "O *pitṛdeva*, you have become a ghost. May you accept this ghost-food and be satisfied." Is this a qualified son's expression of faith

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(*śraddhā*) in his qualified father? This is why Vaiṣṇavas boycott such ghostly *śrāddha* ceremonies.

You should also boycott a society that performs or makes one perform such ghost *śrāddha*. Show my letter to the members of your village community and tell them that we are prepared to debate on this subject anywhere in any religious assembly. If they want to debate, then we will always be ready to come to your village to discuss the scriptures.

A subtle distinction between the ideas of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura

After *paramārādhya* Śrīla Gurudeva accepted *sannyāsa*, following every Gaura-pūrṇimā, he invariably went to meet with *pūjyapāda* Śrīmad Bhakti Rakṣaka Śrīdhara Mahārāja, from whom he had received his *sannyāsa-veśa*. When he went to Śrī Caitanya Sārasvata Maṭha in 1952, he took some of us *maṭha* residents with him. All the Vaiṣṇavas offered *daṇḍavat-praṇāma* to each other upon arrival and then began an *iṣṭagoṣṭhī*. The participating devotees, besides our *gurupāda-padma*, included Śrīmad Bhakti Rakṣaka Śrīdhara Mahārāja, Śrīmad Bhakti Vicāra Yāyāvara Mahārāja, Śrīmad Bhakti Āloka Paramahaṁsa Mahārāja, Śrīmad Bhakti Kamala Madhusūdana Mahārāja and Śrīmad Bhakti Vikāśa Hṛṣikeśa Mahārāja. Many *sannyāsīs* and qualified *brahmacārīs* were present.

In this *iṣṭagoṣṭhī*, someone very politely posed the question, "There is a slight difference between the commentaries of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura on the fifth verse of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's *Śrī Upadeśāmṛta*: *kṛṣṇeti yasya giri taṁ manasādriyeta, dīkṣāsti cet praṇatibhiś ca bhajantam īśam*. How may this difference be reconciled?"

Venerable Śrīmad Bhakti Vicāra Yāyāvara Mahārāja asked, "What seems to you to be the difference between the two commentaries?" The enquirer clarified his question. "Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has written in his commentary that the *madhyama-adhikārī* who properly understands his responsibility towards *kaniṣṭha-adhikārīs* will offer them respect from the core of his heart. He can hear *kṛṣṇa-nāma* from their mouth, providing they are free from the faults of associating with women and *māyāvādīs*, even though such *kaniṣṭha-adhikārīs* may be of meagre intelligence and bereft of *sambandha-jñāna*. If such *kaniṣṭha-adhikārīs* have received *dīkṣā-mantra* from a bona fide *guru* and are engaged in *hari-bhajana*, upon hearing *kṛṣṇa-nāma* from their mouth, the *madhyama-adhikārī* will respect them by offering *daṇḍavat-praṇāma*.

"However, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura has explained it a little differently, on the basis of the words *dīkṣāsti cet*, which refers to those who have accepted *dīkṣā*. He says that the *madhyama-adhikārī* who properly understands his responsibility towards the *kaniṣṭha-adhikārīs* will offer respect from the core of his heart to those who are chanting Kṛṣṇa's name, provided they have been initiated into the *kṛṣṇa-mantra* by a bona fide *guru*, have understood that Kṛṣṇa and His name are non-different, and have accepted the transcendental name of Kṛṣṇa to be the only *sādhana*. The *madhyama-adhikārī* will show respect by physically offering his *daṇḍavat-praṇāma* to those initiated Vaiṣṇavas

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who continuously chant *kṛṣṇa-nāma* with great affection, who have attained their own *svarūpa* by *nāma-bhajana*, and are established in *madhyama-adhikāra*; and he will also offer them respect in his mind.

"Thus it seems that there is some difference between these two commentaries. Which of the two explanations should we accept? Alternatively, how do we reconcile the apparent difference between them? How can they be harmonized?"

On hearing this, all of the Vaiṣṇavas requested *prapūjya-caraṇa* Śrīmad Bhakti Rakṣaka Śrīdhara Mahārāja to solve the apparently problematic question. *Pūjyapāda* Śrīdhara Mahārāja became very thoughtful and began his reply. "Ordinarily, the commentaries of two members of our *guru-varga* have the same meaning. Nevertheless, the explanation of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura is supported by *śāstra*. According to the verse, *no dīkṣāṁ na ca sat-kriyām* from Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's *Padyāvalī* (29), *kṛṣṇa-nāma* is so powerful that it bestows results even up to the point of liberation, as soon as it touches the tongue of dog-eaters and other untouchables. It does not even wait for pious activities, preparatory rituals and so on. In *śāstra* there are many statements to substantiate the unprecedented effect of *kṛṣṇa-nāma*:

(a) *yan nāmadheya śravanānukīrtanād ... śvādo 'pi sadyaḥ savanāya kalpate*
(b) *aho bata śvapaco 'to garīyān yad vartate jihvāgre nāma tubhyam*
(c) *yan nāma sakṛcchravaṇāt pukkaśo 'pi vimucyate saṁsārāt*
(d) *sakṛd api parigītaṁ śraddhayā helayā vā bhṛguvara naramātram tārayet kṛṣṇa-nāma*
(e) *sāṅketyaṁ pārihāsyam ... haraṁ viduḥ*
(f) *yadābhāso 'pyudhan ... mahimānaṁ prabhavati* (Rūpa Gosvāmī's *Kṛṣṇa-nāma-stotram*)
(g) *mriyamāṇo harer nāma ... kiṁ punaḥ śraddhayā gṛṇan*
(h) *patitaḥ skhalito bhajanaḥ ... pumān nārhati yātanām*

"This scriptural evidence supports the conclusion that even a dog-eater, who has not accepted *dīkṣa*, becomes supremely pure simply by chanting *harināma*. Whether he has *śraddhā* or not, *kṛṣṇa-nāma* delivers him from the endless cycle of birth and death when he chants even once. What to speak of chanting, even one who hears *kṛṣṇa-nāma* is at once liberated from material existence. Those who chant the name of Bhagavān while coming or going, slipping, falling, sneezing or in any other way will not have to taste the dire sufferings of repeated birth and death. So if anyone chants *kṛṣṇa-nāma* and is free from ungodly qualities opposed to *bhakti*, it is certainly proper Vaiṣṇava behaviour to honour him mentally, whether he is initiated or not."

When *paramārādhya* Śrīla Gurudeva heard *pūjyapāda* Śrīdhara Mahārāja's opinion, he said with great humility, "Śrīpāda Śrīdhara Mahārājajī's explanation of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's commentary on this verse is in accordance with *śāstra* in all respects, and it is full of good conclusions. There is no doubt about that. However, I have something further to say on this subject. The first point is that *jagad-guru* Śrīla Prabhupāda has associated with Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura since his very birth. From his childhood he studied Vaiṣṇava literature such as *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, *Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi* and *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* under Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's tuition, and heard his explanations of *Vedānta-sūtra* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. He is steeped exclusively in the *bhaktivinoda-dhārā*, the flowing current of Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda's conceptions. At the same time he is an unparalleled

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scholar, thoroughly versed in Veda, Vedānta and all *śāstra*. It was he who acquainted us with the gracious Śrīman Mahāprabhu and His associates, especially with Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. Without a doubt, he knows the moods of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's heart. He must certainly have seen Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's translation and his commentary, *Pīyūṣavarsiṇī-vṛtti*, on this verse. Yet, he has still given a distinct explanation in his own translation and commentary, *Anuvṛtti*. He has certainly done this intentionally. Therefore we must understand the commentary of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura through the medium of Śrīla Prabhupāda, and we should give prominence to Śrīla Prabhupāda's commentary.

"The second point is that Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has determined the Vaiṣṇava *sadācāra*, appropriate conduct, in relation to the general glories of *kṛṣṇa-nāma*. However, the fruit of *śrī kṛṣṇa-nāma* that Śrīman Mahāprabhu practised and propagated is the ultimate goal, or *prayojana*, namely, the attainment of *kṛṣṇa-prema*. Now, one cannot progress even one step in the direction of that ultimate *prayojana* unless one chants *kṛṣṇa-nāma* with *sambandha-jñāna* and is free from *aparādha* and so on. In *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Ādi-līlā* 8.24, 26, 29–30) it has been stated:

> *'kṛṣṇa-nāma' kare aparādhera vicāra*
> *kṛṣṇa balile aparādhīra nā haya vikāra*
>
> One must consider the effect of offences while chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*. It is because of these offences that one does not become ecstatic while chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa.
>
> *eka 'kṛṣṇa-nāme' kare sarva-pāpa nāśa*
> *premera kāraṇa bhakti karena prakāśa*
>
> Chanting Kṛṣṇa's name just once destroys all sinful activities, and pure devotional service, which is the cause of *prema*, becomes manifest.
>
> *hena kṛṣṇa-nāma yadi laya bahu-bāra*
> *tabu yadi prema nahe, nahe aśrudhāra*
>
> *tabe jāni, aparādha tāhāte pracura*
> *kṛṣṇa-nāma-bīja tāhe nā kare aṅkura*
>
> If one chants *harināma* again and again, but ecstatic love does not develop and tears do not appear in the eyes, then one may know that it is because of many offences that the seed of the holy name of Kṛṣṇa does not sprout.

"Keeping in mind the particular consideration mentioned in these verses, Śrīla Prabhupāda has given the instruction to honour in one's mind the person who is endowed with *sambandha-jñāna*, that is, one who has received *dīkṣā*, who is free from *aparādha*, who understands that Kṛṣṇa and His name are non-different, and who understands that *aprākṛta-nāma* is the only *sādhana*. He also continually engages in the service of *kṛṣṇa-nāma*, and strives for the ultimate goal, *kṛṣṇa-prema*. It is this type of *nāma* that Śrīman Mahāprabhu describes in *ānandāmbudhi-vardhanaṁ prati-padaṁ pūrnāmṛtāsvādanam* and *paraṁ vijayate śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtanam* in His *Śrī Śikṣāṣṭaka* (Verse 1).

"*Pūjyapāda* Śrīdhara Mahārāja has quoted a part of a verse, *no dīkṣāṁ na ca sat-kriyām*, from *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Madhya-līlā* 15.110). In Śrīla Prabhupāda's *Anubhāṣya* on this verse, he himself has said that measures such as *puraścaryā* (regulative principles before initiation) have been given so that one can achieve perfection in chanting one's *mantra*. But for *śrī nāma mahā-mantra* there is no consideration of the regulations of *puraścaryā*, because all the

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results of *puraścaryā* are obtained automatically simply by uttering *kṛṣṇa-nāma* once. So for the perfection of *śrī mahā-mantra*, there is no consideration of *puraścaryā* or any other pious activities.

"However, in this same verse, the last line, *mantro 'yaṁ rasanā-spṛg eva phalati śrī-kṛṣṇa-nāmātmakaḥ*, has a confidential meaning: 'This *mantra*, composed of Kṛṣṇa's names, offers its result simply upon touching the tongue.' Specifically, *rasanā-spṛg* means touching that tongue which is *sevonmukha*, inclined to render service. The tongue cannot possibly manifest *kṛṣṇa-nāma* at any time unless it is *sevonmukha*. The presence of various *anarthas* and *aparādhas* prevent *śuddha-nāma* from arising on the tongue which is inclined to enjoy inert matter. This has been stated in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.2.232):

> *ataḥ śrī-kṛṣṇa-nāmādi*
> *na bhaved grāhyam indriyaiḥ*
> *sevonmukhe hi jihvādau*
> *svayam eva sphuraty adaḥ*
>
> Śrī Kṛṣṇa's name, form, qualities and pastimes are all transcendental principles. They are not perceptible to the material senses such as the eyes, ears and tongue. *Śrī nāma, rūpa, guṇa* and *līlā* manifest on the *jīva's* tongue when the tendency to render service arises in his heart.

"In this way, as the *sādhaka* gradually becomes elevated by continually chanting the holy name, he earns the qualification to serve Kṛṣṇa. He then realizes the transcendental nature of *nāma, dhāma* and so on, and he becomes established in *madhyama-adhikāra*. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has stipulated in this verse from *Upadeśāmṛta* that one should honour such a *madhyama-adhikārī* Vaiṣṇava within one's heart, and at the same time, with one's body, one should offer *daṇḍavat-praṇāma*."

When the assembled Vaiṣṇavas heard Śrīla Gurudeva's thoughts, which were pregnant with substantial *siddhānta*, they all supported his opinion and applauded him heartily.

Śrīla Gurupāda-padma's supra-mundane character and steadfast guru-niṣṭhā

(Written by Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Mahārāja)

While *paramārādhyatama* Śrīla Keśava Gosvāmīpāda was commenting on *vairāgya-yukta bhakti-rasa*, he explained that *vairāgya*, renunciation, is the intense feeling of separation from Kṛṣṇa which consists of the desire to please His senses (*kṛṣṇendriya prīti-vāñchā-maya vipralambha*). The knowledge of *vairāgya* that consists of the desire to give happiness to Kṛṣṇa (*kṛṣṇa-sukha-vāñchā-mayī vairāgya-vidyā*) is actual *vairāgya brahma-jñāna*, and it displays contempt, fear and disrespect towards worthless *jñāna, sāyujya-mukti* and other forms of liberation. Generally, *sādhaka jīvas* think that *vairāgya* means the renunciation of all enjoyment for the pleasure of Kṛṣṇa. However, the *mukta-puruṣas*, liberated personalities, accept only dedication to *kṛṣṇa-sevā* as *vairāgya*. Śrīla Dāsa Gosvāmī has pointed out that *vairāgya-yukta bhakti-rasa* consists of detachment, knowledge and devotional activities performed for Kṛṣṇa's

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service. The *māyāvāda* conception excludes the existence of transcendental pastimes (*cid-vilāsa*), but this can never be called *vairāgya*.

The word *vairāgya* is used to describe one of the six opulences of Bhagavān. This Bhagavān is Māyādhīśa, the Lord of *māyā*. *Bhakti* can never be attained by artificial endeavours to practise renunciation in solitary meditation (*nirjana-bhajana*). People who are not spiritually inclined think that *vairāgya* means material renunciation, but we find in the *śāstras* that *vairāgya* is simply the topmost stage of longing for *kṛṣṇa-vilāsa*, Kṛṣṇa's pleasure pastimes. *Prākṛta-sahajiyās* and those who renounce material enjoyment practise so-called *vairāgya* to satisfy their desires, but this is merely a temporary, deceitful *sādhana*. Only through the eyes of *bhakti* can one see or realize the eternally perfect renunciation of the eternally perfect *mahātmās*, who are intent on Śrī Kṛṣṇa's happiness.

Detachment and omniscience are naturally evident in the lives of *mahāpuruṣas*. Residing in the heart of the *sādhaka* in the form of the Supersoul (*antaryāmī*), these *mahāpuruṣas* can easily say who is attached to satisfying his own senses in the name of service to Śrī Hari. They also give favourable opportunities for the *sādhaka* to become liberated from the clutches of this hypocrisy. Moreover, being very affectionate towards the *sevakas*, and seeing their service tendency, they bestow on them the enthusiasm to serve Hari, Guru and Vaiṣṇavas.

"*Keśarīva sva-potānām anyeṣām ugra-vikramaḥ* – the lioness shows her prowess towards her enemy but is very affectionate towards her offspring." [This verse was composed by Śrīdhara Svāmī in his commentary on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (7.9.1).] Similarly, for atheistic hypocrites, Śrīla Gurupāda-padma was the direct personification of time (Yama), the enforcher of punishment, but he was full of loving, parental affection for his disciples and those who had taken shelter of him. He would purify them of their hundreds of faults and mistakes, give them the chance to do *sevā* and engage them in *hari-bhajana*. If anyone came to his *maṭha* or missions for *hari-bhajana*, he would provide them shelter and the golden opportunity to perform *hari-bhajana*, even if they were old, diseased or devoid of any worldly qualifications. This is undoubtedly an ideal to look up to and a brilliant example of his complete surrender to Kṛṣṇa, his mercy and magnanimity, his compassionate nature and quality of helping all, and his sorrow upon seeing others suffering.

Adherents to morality say, "*satyaṁ bruyāt priyaṁ bruyāt, mā bruyāt satyam apriyam* – one should speak true and palatable words, but the truth should not be spoken if it is unpalatable." However, Gurupāda-padma would always announce loudly that it is right to speak the truth even if unpalatable. If we do not speak the truth, then many of *śāstras'* secrets will not be revealed and broadcast in this world. *Sādhu, guru* and Vaiṣṇavas give real welfare to the people of the world, and even if their heart-touching words are not materially pleasing, they are nonetheless the cause of complete auspiciousness.

In this connection, *paramārādhya* Śrīla Gurudeva has written, "Nowadays we see the publication of many religious magazines that are gradually deviating from the rules and regulations established and preached by *ācārya kesarī jagad-guru* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda. The main cause for this is the desire for worldly gain, name and fame. We should always remember the teaching of *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*: '*Dharma* cannot be protected unless one is detached.' One should set

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an ideal example to the whole world by embracing even the toughest adversity and by maintaining complete detachment." The sharp words and criticism spoken by *sādhu*, *guru* and Vaiṣṇavas bring about one's good fortune and remove the difficulties and obstacles related to *bhajana*. Their detached morality, along with the disciplinary words and unpleasant truths that they administer, have the same function as chanting medicinal *mantras*, and the result is that one obtain a taste for chanting *śrī nāma*.

Śrīla Guru Mahārāja showed incomparable love and sympathy towards his peer godbrothers. Sometimes, a godbrother would not directly ask him for anything, but simply by his affectionately addressing him as Vinoda Dā or Keśava Mahārāja, he would understand their situation and help them as much as he could, financially and in other ways. But he never expected financial help for himself. In this way he generously and selflessly gave thousands of rupees to help others. This was undoubtedly because of his parental affection for his godbrothers.

All sorts of people used to come in great numbers to take his *darśana*: scholars, people who were proud of their so-called devotion, ignorant people, skilled people, children, young men and elderly. Everyone would forget their own desires and questions when they heard his grave and authoritative voice and saw his mild and peaceful figure and his gently smiling lotus face. Even when defeating *māyāvādī* logicians, he would always protect their dignity. Many people who had separate motives would come and listen to various kinds of advice, but they could not accept the potency of this *ekāntika sādhu* and *mahāpuruṣa* who was so devoted to Kṛṣṇa. How can ordinary people truly understand the transcendental behaviour of eternally perfected great souls? Ordinary people do not and cannot understand their mercy or their deception. Śrī Gurudeva's view was, "No one in this world is an object for my attachment (*anurāga*) or indifference (*virāga*). All are means for serving *guru* and Kṛṣṇa." This is the transcendental viewpoint of the *mahā-bhāgavatas*.

It has already been mentioned that Śrīla Guru Mahārāja's fresh outlook and unique speciality was evident in every engagement and action that he performed. He used the figures of *pāṣaṇḍa-gajaika-siṁha* (the lion-like person who destroys the elephant of heresy) on the wall of Narahari Toraṇa, the main gate of Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha, Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti's main preaching centre in Navadvīpa. Śrīla Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura glorified Murāri Bhagavān Śrī Caitanya-candra as *pāṣaṇḍa-gajaika-siṁha*. Śrīla Gurudeva's intimate godbrother, Śrīla Bhakti Sāraṅga Gosvāmī Mahārāja, also decorated him with this same name, for it was as if he was always holding a sword in his hand to defeat *māyāvādīs* and others opposed to *śuddha-bhakti*. Knowing such people to be his eternal enemies, he made an unshakeable vow to uproot Śrī Śaṅkara's *advaitavāda*, or *māyāvāda*, from this world. He clearly expressed this determination in his letters, essays, articles, commentaries, explanations, statements, lectures and so on. *Parama-pūjyapāda* Śrīla Bhakti Sāraṅga Gosvāmī Mahārāja would say to Śrīla Gurupāda-padma, "When I see you, the memory of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda comes into my mind. Anyone whose *darśana* makes the memory of Śrīla Gurudeva appear in the mind is *guru-svarūpa*, the embodiment of *guru*, and he is the greatest of all *mahā-bhāgavatas*."

It is said, "All of Kṛṣṇa's qualities appear in His devotees." Śrīla Ācāryadeva had not passed exams

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Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, sitting on the chair in the middle, and the author, Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja, sitting to the left holding a *daṇḍa*

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in law or engineering, but he would give legal advice to lawyers and barristers, and he would also advise engineers. Many expert engineers were amazed to learn that the *tilaka*-marked, sky-high temple of the main *maṭha* was constructed according to Śrīla Guru Mahārāja's instructions and design. *Jagad-guru* Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura had said, "It is quite essential to protect the *sevā* of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī in order to protect the *sampradāya*." By this he meant that he aimed to protect Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's *sevā* by instigating lawsuits to save *maṭhas* and temples from the hands of sense enjoyers and wicked people. Śrīla Gurupāda-padma followed the instructions of his *ārādhyadeva* Śrīla Prabhupāda and accepted the responsibility of protecting the mission by legal means. Even Prabhupāda would be amazed by his astonishing talent and power of memory. Once, during an argument with some lawyers, Śrīla Guru Mahārāja's godbrother, Śrīla Mādhava Mahārāja, asked him, "When did you study law in such a way that in argument, even lawyers are obliged to accept your words?"

Śrīla Guru Mahārāja made an unparalleled contribution in composing Vaiṣṇava literature and revealing ever-fresh deep meanings of the principles of *bhakti*. The speciality of his writings is that he kept an unbroken flow of *bhāva*, or inner meaning, contained in the main *tattva-siddhāntas*. At the same time, he maintained his own position and point of view and did not follow the general masses. "Protecting the *sampradāya* is the topmost service to Śrīman Mahāprabhu," he used to think, and only after carefully considering this did he take up his most powerful pen. His main goal was to establish *tattva-siddhāntas* directly and indirectly through the medium of debates, and he exhibited a remarkable and transcendental creativity in doing this. His ever-fresh and transcendental genius has been illuminated in his songs such as *Śrīla Prabhupāda āratī, Śrī Tulasī-āratī* and *Maṅgala-āratī*. In the wake of *Gīta-govinda* by the transcendental poet Śrī Jayadeva, Śrīla Guru Mahārāja in his *Maṅgala-āratī* song gives an introduction to the supreme and unequalled, sweet transcendental pastimes of the eternally youthful Divine Couple of Vraja.

Sometimes an unexpected guest would arrive when Śrīla Gurupāda-padma was dictating an article for *Śrī Patrikā*. At such a time, he would converse with the guest, not showing the slightest indifference towards him, and at the same time he would retain complete focus on his presentation of the principal subject matter of the article. There is no doubt that this was also one of his unique and supra-mundane characteristics.

It was Śrīla Ācāryadeva's undivided *niṣṭhā* towards his own *śrī guru mahārāja* that most clearly established his superior position among Śrīla Prabhupāda's disciples and followers. Śrīla Gurupāda-padma gave good advice to his godbrothers on legal matters and all kinds of other concerns. In doing so, he revealed his generous and moral disposition. The Sārasvata Gauḍīya community accepted him as a lawyer and also as a learned expert in management and politics. This was because, when complex questions arose concerning spiritual knowledge and pseudo-logic, he would give good answers that were in accordance with the conclusions of *śāstra*.

Śrīla Ācāryadeva displayed the ideal standards for observing fasting days. On Śrī Janmāṣṭamī, Śrī Ekādaśī, Śrī Gaura-jayantī, Śrī Rāma-navamī, Śrī Nṛsiṁha-caturdaśī, Śrī Advaita-saptamī, Śrī Nityānanda-trayodaśī and other fast days, he firmly rejected fasting on days which overlapped with the previous day. He gave the fullest protection

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to the observance of Cāturmāsya and *ūrjā-vrata* (*kārtika-vrata*) in Śrī Vedānta Samiti, completely following the rules practised and preached by Śrīla Sarasvatī Prabhupāda, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Śrīman Mahāprabhu. He never supported reluctance to follow the Cāturmasya vow or laxity in honouring *ūrjā-vrata*.

Śrīla Gurudeva especially manifested *guru-niṣṭhā* during a discussion on *tattva-siddhānta* with the most worshipable *yatirāja* Śrīla Śrīdhara Gosvāmī Mahārāja. On that occasion, he said, "I do not know or recognize the path of the previous Gosvāmīs. I simply accept *jagad-guru* Śrīla Prabhupāda's line of thought as unerring truth, and I will try to know and understand the previous Gosvāmīs through Śrīla Prabhupāda's vision. I will first accept the excellence of his explanations and commentaries. '*Ācāryera mata jeī, seī mata sāra / anya āra jata mata jāuka chārakhāra* – the opinion of the *ācārya* is the most important; any other opinions should be rejected.' This is my conception." This single-pointed *niṣṭhā* he showed towards Śrīla Prabhupāda is certainly unequalled.

Śrīla Gurupāda-padma, the dear-most associate of Śrī Gaurasundara, has written *Māyāvāda kī Jīvanī* for the eternal benefit of the conditioned souls. After refuting materialists, mistaken *yogīs* and other people holding faulty doctrines, he showed them the path of real spiritual knowledge and the ultimate spiritual benefit. As an ideal *tridaṇḍi gosvāmī*, he wanted to bestow true auspiciousness even upon antagonistic hypocrites. We have many times witnessed his fearlessness and steadfastness in protecting the truth. He never once supported those who said that spirit and matter are non-different. To expose the enjoying tendencies and selfish mentality of the *prākṛta-sahajiyās*, he published *Sahajiyā-dalana*, which was based on a compilation of articles, etc., written by Śrīla Prabhupāda and Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. He demonstrated the ideal of a faultless way of life by preaching from this book and by devoting himself to pure Vaiṣṇava standards of behaviour.

Śrīla Ācāryadeva established spiritual dispensaries and also a Vedānta college. The central government and various missions were introducing initiatives to try to relieve the sufferings of the perishable body and mind in the name of social service. Śrīla Gurudeva's purpose was to show that these endeavours were practically useless. He was stronger than a thunderbolt in rejecting bad association, and softer than a lotus flower in the face of endeavours favourable for the cultivation of *bhakti*. He never supported the *karma-kāṇḍīya* principles of the materialistic *smārta* society, who simply follow ritualistic customs and principles.[4] Śrīla Gurupāda-padma instead gave the pure instructions to follow vows such as *śrī puruṣottama-vrata* by engaging in *śrī nāma-bhajana* only. He spent his life as a surrendered soul who had no possessions and was completely dependent on Kṛṣṇa's will. His attitude was always 'May the desire of Bhagavān be fulfilled' and 'By the will of Bhagavān, everything is possible'. All his disciples were amazed to see this. Everyone was attracted to his affection towards all living entities, and his simple and compassionate behaviour to all – young and old, even to birds like pigeons and sparrows. All were attracted to his intimate love and affection (*mamatā*) and his practice of non-violence.

4 Editor: These regulations dictate, for example, that a certain number of days after someone's birth or death are impure, and that the Puruṣottama leap month is an impure month when no religious activities should take place.

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Śrīla Gurupāda-padma's simple, sweet and profound inner sentiments would never be disturbed, even while he was strongly refuting the degraded, devious and cheating beliefs of those who consider that the living being is *brahma*; of those who respect all kinds of gods (*pāñcamiśālīs*); worshipers of the five deities Sūrya, Gaṇeśa, Durgā, Śiva and Viṣṇu (*pañcopāsakas*); of people who believe that there are many gods (*bahu-īśvara-vādīs*); of voidists (*śūnya-vādīs*); of impersonalistic pantheists (*nirviśeṣa brahmavādīs*) and others. He never supported laziness in the name of performing solitary *bhajana*. On the contrary, he instructed everyone to cultivate *kṛṣṇa-bhakti* in the association of *sādhus* by body, mind and words. He taught by his own exemplary practice that one attains all perfection and absorption in *kṛṣṇa-prema* only by *śrī harināma*. To his disciples, he demonstrated by his own perfect example that one can conquer hunger, thirst and the inimical tendencies of the senses by performing regulated or unregulated loud *kīrtana* of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*, consisting of sixteen names, day and night.

Śrīla Kavirāja Gosvāmī said, 'I am lower than a worm in stool' and Śrīla Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura said, 'I will kick the head of such people [averse to Hari, Guru and Vaiṣṇavas]', but the purport of these two statements is one and the same. One should understand the real humility in these words, for it is beneficial for the real self. The spiritual instruction in these statements is to chant *kṛṣṇa-nāma* after being initiated into the *dharma* of offering respect to one and all without expecting any honour in return. The exalted and profound sentiments of Śrīla Gurudeva's *bhajana* concerning his object and method of worship (*upāsya-tattva*) established him as both a *bhajanānandī* and a *goṣṭhānandī* at the same time.

His mercy in acting to liberate *jīvas* from their burden of *anarthas* was causeless. The doors of his temples and *maṭhas* were always open for the benefit of people trying to perform *hari-bhajana*. His endeavours to serve his peer Vaiṣṇavas were without limit, and his service satisfied them in all respects. The best introduction to his supra-mundane character is given in the books that he wrote to destroy *māyāvāda*; in his poems, philosophical articles and so on; and in the profound lectures based on *tattva-siddhānta* he delivered at various assemblies. He remained immersed in the pleasure of serving Śrī Śrī Gaura-Rādhā-Vinoda-bihārījī. He took full shelter of Śrīla Sarasvatī Prabhupāda's instructions, was eternally established in the conception of Śrī Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, and always relished the concepts preached by Śrī Rūpa and Raghunātha. He would always try to engage his disciples in *hari-kathā* and *hari-kīrtana*, and, he instructed them to avoid mundane conversation, or 'the urge of speech' mentioned in *Upadeśāmṛta*.

No one could give Śrīla Gurupāda-padma any foodstuffs or clothes, no matter how hard they tried. He never accepted any donations or deeds of properties from his widowed followers, and he would not allow his disciples to accept such charity either. On the other hand, he would hardly ever refrain from giving mercy even when it was not asked for. To inspire enthusiasm to serve *guru* and Vaiṣṇavas, he sometimes accepted people's ordinary things. He was anxious about the condition of people who were attached to their families, and he would always warn his renunciant disciples by describing the *prākṛta-sahajiyās* as *ghara-pāgāla*, madly attached to home, and *gṛhī-bāulā*, staying at home but making a show of being renunciants. He used to quote the

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statement from *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Antya-līlā* 6.278):

> *viṣayīra anna khāile malina haya mana*
> *malina mana haile, nahe kṛṣṇera smaraṇa*
>
> If one eats food given by materialists, the mind becomes contaminated, and when the mind is contaminated one cannot remember Kṛṣṇa.

Following this principle, he strictly forbade any exchange or contact with the *sampradāyas* of those who try to enjoy *guru* (*guru-bhogīs*) and those who renounce *guru* (*guru-tyāgīs*). By his own example he taught his disciples to practise the renunciation of enjoyment for the pleasure of Kṛṣṇa. During *śrī ūrjā-vrata, śrī puruṣottama-vrata* and other *vratas*, he would instruct his disciples to practise renunciation by sleeping on the ground and by eating like a cow [i.e., without using one's hands]. In regards to accepting what is favourable for service, he instructed the devotees going for *bhikṣa* to properly consider the verse by Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, "*tomāra sevāya duḥkha haya jata, se o ta' parama sukha* – troubles encountered in Your service shall be the cause of great happiness." He told them that they should not seek to live a comfortable life, but should tolerate difficulties for the service of Śrī Hari, Guru and Vaiṣṇavas. Some people living in the *maṭha* had large enough bank balances to maintain themselves for the rest of their lives. He called those so-called disciples hypocrites disguised as Vaiṣṇavas, sense enjoyers devoid of faith in Bhagavān, and atheists.

Śrīla Gurupāda-padma was the ideal *guru* and was expert in *kṛṣṇa-tattva*. He forbade followers with *anarthas* to meditate on *aṣṭa-kālīya-līlā* and imagine their *siddha-deha*, their spiritual form. He particularly attracted the attention of everyone by quoting *jagad-guru* Śrīla Prabhupāda's instructive words: "*Smaraṇa* will take place by the influence of *kīrtana*, and then it is possible to perform solitary *bhajana*." He pointed out that the improper imitation of *śrī guru* and Vaiṣṇavas is not service or worship, but rather hypocrisy. He asked his disciples to write the following verse by Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura on the main door of his Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Catuṣpāṭhī:

> *jaḍa-vidyā jata, māyāra vaibhava,*
> *tomāra bhajane bādhā*
> *moha janamiyā, anitya saṁsāre,*
> *jīvake karaye gādhā*
>
> The knowledge of this material world is knowledge born of Your illusory energy (*māyā*). It creates obstacles in devotional service and makes an ass of the eternal living entity by increasing his infatuation with this temporary world.

In other words, the goal of studying the *śāstras*, grammar and so forth is not to collect money, beautiful women and prestige. "Everyone will respect that knowledge which, when discussed, causes *kṛṣṇa-rati* to manifest in the heart. You must sincerely kick out whatever knowledge causes obstacles to *bhakti*. Sarasvatī, the goddess of learning, is dear to Kṛṣṇa, and *kṛṣṇa-bhakti* resides in her heart. This knowledge in devotion is Bhaktivinoda's wealth." Śrīla Gurudeva always liked to explain these statements and moods of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura.

Śrīla Gurupāda-padma never tolerated those who imitated *bhakti*, or those who were duplicitous while pretending to offer service. Once he established a *maṭha* that one of his *gṛhastha* disciples had donated to him. Later

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on, when this disciple tried to make *guru* and Vaiṣṇavas his servants, Śrīla Gurudeva called back the *maṭha* residents and showed indifference towards his so-called disciple. He would be strict in instructing his personal servants or so-called disciples to abandon duplicity. He was careful to protect the honour of the *guru's* senior servants so that they could co-operate and live together on good terms. He condemned the behaviour of people who falsely pretended to maintain their lives by begging alms (*madhukarī*) in Vraja-maṇḍala or other holy places. He would also remind us that people who are attached to sense gratification have to accept birth in Vraja as monkeys, turtles and other lower species. He would say that no one is qualified to beg for *nirguṇa-madhukarī* until their heart has become free from material qualities.

On one occasion, one of Śrīla Guru Mahārāja's godbrothers wrote in his magazine, "Those who are outside Māyāpura or who are far from there are deprived of service to Śrīla Prabhupāda." Śrīla Ācāryadeva objected to this and announced in a voice as deep as a thunderbolt, "Those who are *guru-bhogīs* or *guru-tyāgīs* are situated millions of miles away from Prabhupāda. Such people may apparently have lived in Māyāpura for ten or twelve years, but actually they have deserted Māyāpura and have been living in the kingdom of Kali the whole time. Outwardly they pretended to serve Śrīla Prabhupāda and Śrī Dhāma, but they were not really serving them at all. Śrī Gurupāda-padma, who is non-different from Nityānanda Prabhu, always deceives those people who are duplicitous about wealth. However, those servants who are fixed in *guru-sevā* and whose lives are surrendered to *guru* can always remain absorbed in the service of Śrī Gurudeva's innermost desires, regardless of where they are staying." Śrīla Gurupāda-padma tried from the core of his heart to serve any person related to Śrīla Prabhupāda. In this respect he was equal to all, whether they were renunciant residents of the *maṭha*, *gṛhasthas* or ordinary people who approached him. This is the special transcendental quality of a disciple who has offered his *ātmā*, his very self, to Śrī Gurudeva.

Śrī Gurupāda-padma was many times seen to be very particular about the way he kept even five and ten rupee notes in his purse. This sometimes caused doubts regarding his detachment from money. When asked about this, he would reply in Śrīla Prabhupāda's words, "*Āsakti-rahit sambandha-sahit viṣaya-samūha sakali mādhava* – we should be detached from material things and at the same time see them in relation to Mādhava, as everything is meant for His pleasure." In other words, that money would be used for serving Śrīman Mahāprabhu. With this transcendental attitude one will derive the happiness of loving service based on the desire to satisfy Kṛṣṇa's senses. Those who try to imitate Śrīla Gurupāda-padma's divine character will inevitably fall down from *bhajana*. However, accepting the instructions he gives out of love to benefit the soul will bring auspiciousness. He said that *śrī guru* becomes unhappy upon witnessing the misery of others, but even though *śrī guru's* heart is distressed when he sees duplicitous people, it still does not bring them auspiciousness.

One day a devotee was studying the commentaries on *rāsa-līlā, Bhramara-gīta*, etc., and Śrīla Gurudeva said, "The qualification to hear topics such as *rāsa-līlā* will come when *śrī nāma-kīrtana* has freed the heart from *anarthas*, and *śuddha-sattva* has appeared there. Otherwise, the transcendental pastimes of Śrī Śrī

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Rādhā-Govinda will appear to be the activities of a worldly hero and heroine and will only give rise to false ideas. The conception of *rasa* is only possible in the *siddha-deha*, the state of perfection. It is impossible to perceive *sṛṅgāra-rasa* in the material body. Only a person who is free from the lower types of enjoyment and is in the stage of *bhāva* is qualified to discuss *sambhoga-rasa*, the mellow of amorous love."

To understand *śrī guru* and Vaiṣṇavas in truth, it is essential to have the mercy and inspiration of Bhagavān. Sometimes Vaiṣṇavas honour a person who is averse to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, in an endeavour to be free of his bad association. Moreover, they sometimes hide their *svarūpa*, their real form, out of fear of associating with worldly and sensualistic persons (*jana-saṅga*). Sometimes they appear to accept disciples and falsely maintain the disguise of acting as if they are accepting service and advice from their disciples. Nevertheless, in all respects they protect their dependence and independence. This is the speciality of their inconceivable, divine character.

Śrīla Ācāryadeva always led his life in such a way as to protect Śrīla Prabhupāda's innermost desire. He would constantly be engaged in establishing *daiva-varnāśrama-dharma*, reaching the conclusions of *bhakti* which he himself fully practised, establishing Śrī Dhāma *parikramā*, setting up printing presses to publish *bhakti* literature, *śrī nāma-haṭṭa* preaching and other such services.

Some months before Śrīla Paramārādhyadeva entered *aprakaṭa-līlā*, he acted as if he were accepting medical treatment in the big city of Kolkata, the capital of Kali. At that time, he was staying in a house of a very faithful devotee in Ṭyāṇrā. Many people may doubt why he left Śrī Dhāma to stay in the capital of Kali. "*Yathāya vaiṣṇava-gaṇa seī sthāna vṛndāvana, seī sthāne ānanda aśeṣa* – wherever *mahā-bhāgavata śrī gurus* go, they make transcendental Goloka Vṛndāvana appear, and they are themselves absorbed in the *aṣṭa-kālīya-sevā* of the youthful Divine Couple of Vraja."

The eternally liberated, topmost *mahāpuruṣas* relish the sweetness of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda's transcendental pastimes and the magnanimity of Śrī Gaurasundara, who came to bestow the ultimate goal of life, which is *kṛṣṇa-prema*. Ordinary people who yearn to perform *hari-bhajana*, and especially the servants of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti, are exceptionally fortunate and blessed to attain the shelter of the lotus feet of such *mahā-bhāgavatas*. The *śrī rūpānuga-sārasvata* Vaiṣṇavas are and will always remain indebted in all respects to this transcendental *mahāpuruṣa*. There is no doubt in this regard.

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Part Five:

Established Conclusions

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The siddhānta propagated by Śrīla Gurupāda-padma

In every age, Bhagavān and His dear associates appear on Earth, bringing with them gifts of universal auspiciousness. Each time they come, the gifts they bring have their own unique and original nature. Bhagavān is an ocean of compassion, and He and His dear associates do not come to cheat the inhabitants of this material universe by giving away any perishable wealth or commodity. They descend to give in charity something for the eternal welfare of the soul. Their gifts, or contributions, cannot be seen as gross, mundane objects of sense gratification. If anyone tries to view the immortal charity they bestow as gross sense enjoyment, then he is bound to be bereft of the immense mercy of their gift.

Each of the various gifts given by the supremely kind Bhagavān and His associates is unique, but nothing can compare with the *prema-bhakti* distributed by Śrī Gaurasundara, for it includes the original nature and specialities of all the immortal contributions of all previous incarnations (*avatāras*) and *ācāryas*.

Vrajendra-nandana Śyāmasundara, having accepted the ecstatic emotions and lustre of Śrī Rādhā, appeared in this world in the form of Śrī Gaurasundara. He is supremely merciful (*parama-karuṇa*) and the supreme enjoyer of *rasa* (*rasika-śekhara*). Therefore, through the medium of *śrī harināma*, He has distributed a distinctive type of *prema-bhakti* in this world.

By the inspiration and mercy of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī initiated the flow of the river of *bhakti-rasa*, writing books such as *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* and *Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi*. This is the fundamental asset of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas. Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī, Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī, Śrī Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura, Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, Śrī Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, *jagad-guru* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda and all other *rūpānuga* Vaiṣṇavas have preached and propagated this very same *śuddha-* or *prema-bhakti*.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu appeared in this world with His associates and preached *harināma-saṅkīrtana* and pure *bhakti* throughout India in just a few years. Similarly, *oṁ viṣṇupāda* Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda descended to the Earth with his associates roughly one hundred and twenty-five years ago and preached *śrī nāma-saṅkīrtana* and pure *bhakti* throughout the world in a very short time. Śrī Gurupāda-padma, *oṁ viṣṇupāda aṣṭottara-śata* Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, was prominent among Śrīla Prabhupāda's confidential associates.

When *jagad-guru* Śrīla Prabhupāda entered *nitya-līlā*, a dark age arrived for the Sārasvata Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya*. The stream of *śuddha-bhakti* that Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

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and Śrīla Prabhupāda had initiated began to diminish. Their daily, weekly, fortnightly and monthly magazines and journals in different languages were stopped. The *sannyāsīs* and *brahmacārīs* in the preaching centres established by Śrīla Prabhupāda lost their enthusiasm. Abandoning the principal *maṭha*, they began to establish their separate, independent *maṭhas*. Many of those who had previously lived in the *āśrama* returned to household life. In this way, the current of preaching began to dry up.

Śrīla Gurupāda-padma wrote in his brief autobiography, "After the entrance of our *śrī gurudeva* into the unmanifest pastimes on 1 January 1937, various kinds of disturbances began to erupt in the Gauḍīya mission. I left Śrī Caitanya Maṭha under these difficult circumstances in June 1939, and in 1940, on Akṣaya-tṛtīyā in the month of Vaiśākha, I founded Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti in a rented building at 32/2 Bospāḍā Lane, Bāgbāzār, Kolkata. After that, in September 1941, on the Pūrṇimā day of Bhādrapada, in Kaṭvā, where Śrīman Mahāprabhu previously took *sannyāsa*, I accepted *tridaṇḍa-sannyāsa* from *pūjyapāda* Śrīmad Bhakti Rakṣaka Śrīdhara Mahārāja, who had accepted the renounced order from Śrīla Prabhupāda. I then returned to my *maṭha* in Śrī Dhāma Navadvīpa, and from there began preaching and travelling extensively."

Ācārya kesarī oṁ viṣṇupāda Śrī Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Mahārāja's strategy in preaching was to first break apart the ill-conceived doctrines opposed to *bhakti*, such as *māyāvāda*, *smārta* and *sahajiyā*, and then establish the pure *bhakti* practised and preached by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His followers, the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas*. We are herein giving an account of the nature of the pure *bhakti*

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that he disseminated. In his preaching, he always used to quote two particular verses as evidence to establish *bhakti*. The first verse is by Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura:

ārādhyo bhagavān vrajeśa-tanaya-
stad-dhāma vṛndāvanaṁ
ramyā kācid upāsanā vraja-vadhū-
vargeṇa yā kalpitā
śrīmad-bhāgavataṁ pramāṇam amalaṁ
premā pumartho mahān
śrī-caitanya-mahāprabhor matam idaṁ
tatrādaro naḥ paraḥ

Both Bhagavān Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the magnificent Śrī Dhāma Vṛndāvana are the exclusive objects of worship. The mood in which the young brides of Vraja have worshipped Kṛṣṇa is the most excellent of all. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* alone is the immaculate evidence (*śabda-pramāṇa*) and *prema* is the supreme objective of life. This is the supremely worshipful *siddhānta* of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. There is no other conception worthy of respect.

The other verse is the first *śloka* from Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's *Daśamūla-tattva* (*Ten Fundamental Truths*):

āmnāyaḥ prāha tattvaṁ harim iha paramaṁ
sarva-śaktiṁ rasābdhiṁ
tad bhinnaṁśaṁś ca jīvān prakṛti-kavalitān
tad-vimuktāṁś ca bhāvād
bhedābheda-prakāśaṁ sakalam api hareḥ
sādhanaṁ śuddha-bhaktiṁ
sādhyaṁ tat-prītim evety upadiśati
janān gauracandraḥ svayaṁ saḥ

The message of the Vedas received through *guru-paramparā* is called *āmnāya*. The Vedas and *smṛti-śāstra* (such as *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*) which follow the Vedic version have been accepted as authoritative proof, as have different types of evidence such as direct perception, inasmuch as they confirm the Vedic version. From these sources of evidence, the following essential truths are established: (1) Hari is the Supreme Truth, (2) He is *sarva-śaktimān*, endowed with all potencies, (3) He is *akhila-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, the ocean of all nectarean transcendental mellows, (4) two kinds of *jīvas*, namely liberated and conditioned (*mukta* and *baddha*), are His separated expansions (*vibhinnāṁśa-tattva*), (5) the conditioned souls are under the control of *māyā*, (6) the *mukta-jīvas* are liberated from the influence of *māyā*, (7) everything in existence, whether conscious or unconscious, is a manifestation of Śrī Hari and is simultaneously and inconceivably one with and different from Him, (8) *bhakti* is the only *sādhana*, or means to attain the goal, and (9) love for Kṛṣṇa (*kṛṣṇa-prīti*) is the sole objective (*sādhya*).

* * * * *

In the first verse, *ārādhyo bhagavān*, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura has explained in a highly condensed form the doctrine of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. In this verse, *sambandha-*, *abhidheya-* and *prayojana-tattva* have been described in an exceedingly beautiful way in accordance with the *siddhānta* accepted by Śrī Gauḍīya *gosvāmīs*.

Vadanti tat tattva-vidas tattvaṁ yaj jñānam advayam. This verse from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.2.11) describes the Supreme Absolute Truth (*advaya-jñāna para-tattva*), who, although non-dual, is realized in three aspects, which appear

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distinct from each other. These are *brahma*, Paramātmā and Bhagavān. The highest realization is Bhagavān, the Supreme Person who is the cause of all causes and the controller of all controllers. He is full in six opulences and is the origin of the universe, although He Himself has no origin. The imperfect vision of only the *cit*, or knowledge, feature of *bhagavat-tattva* has been called *brahma* realization. In the Upaniṣads this has been called *nirviśeṣa-brahma*, and it is the bodily lustre of Bhagavān. In *yoga-śāstra*, the partial realization of the *sat* and *cit* features of the omnipotent Supreme Truth has been called Paramātmā realization. Such realization is to know Viṣṇu, who measures the size of the thumb and who is situated splendidly within the heart of every *jīva*, as the witness or regulator of the fruits of action.

There are also two divisions of *bhagavat-tattva*, namely *aiśvarya-pradhāna* and *mādhurya-pradhāna*. *Aiśvarya-pradhāna*, the *bhagavat-tattva* that is complete in six opulences, reigns over Vaikuṇṭha in the spiritual sky in the form of Śrī Nārāyaṇa, eternally served by His associates headed by Lakṣmī. *Mādhurya-pradhāna* is Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is eternally present in Vraja, where He is served by the *gopas* and *gopīs*. He is especially endowed with the four types of sweetness, namely, His *veṇu-mādhurī*, *rūpa-mādhurī*, *guṇa-mādhurī* and *līlā-mādhurī* – His incomparably sweet flute, beauty, qualities and pastimes. Therefore, in the above verse, only Vrajendra-nandana Śyāmasundara who resides in Vraja has been described as the most worshipful of all. Although *brahma*, Paramātmā and the whole multitude of incarnations are essentially one in principle, Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa alone is the ultimate aspect of the Supreme Truth because of His superiority in regard to *śakti* and His display of *rasa*.

"Although *brahma*, Paramātmā and the whole multitude of incarnations are essentially one in principle, Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa alone is the ultimate aspect of the Supreme Truth because of His superiority in regard to *śakti* and His display of *rasa*."

The specific meaning of the phrase *tad dhāma vṛndāvanam* is that the sweet pastimes of Vrajendra-nandana Śyāmasundara, who is the nectarean ocean of *rasa*, cannot possibly take place in Vaikuṇṭha, Sāketa (Ayodhya), Dvārakā, Mathurā or anywhere else other than in Vṛndāvana. Therefore Vraja-dhāma, being non-different from Kṛṣṇa, has been described as an equally worshipful principle. Vrajendra-nandana Śyāmasundara is served in Vraja by His associates in *dāsya-*, *sakhya-* and *vātsalya-rasa*, but the sweet service of the *vraja-ramaṇīs* (*gopīs*), filled with the highest mellows of paramour love, is supreme. Among these *gopīs* in paramour love, Śrīmatī Rādhikā, the embodiment of *mahābhāva* and the crest jewel of Kṛṣṇa's beloveds, is the best of all. Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa accepted Her sentiments and bodily complexion and appeared in this world as Śrī Gaurasundara to taste His own sweetness and to distribute *nāma-prema* throughout the universe. The conceptions of this very Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu have been described in a condensed form in the verse under discussion.

In the second verse, Śrī Gaura's associate Śrīla Saccidānanda Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has

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extracted the essence of the conceptions of the Śrī Gauḍīya *gosvāmīs* and *ācāryas*, and has presented them as *daśamūla-tattva*. As if putting the ocean in a pot, he has filled this *daśamūla-tattva* with the concentrated essence of the cream of the Vedas, Upaniṣads, *Vedānta-sūtra*, *Bhagavad-gītā*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and the Gosvāmīs' writings. Our most worshipful Śrīla Gurupāda-padma used to broadcast Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's *daśamūla-tattva* everywhere he went. We are therefore summarizing it here:

āmnāyaḥ prāha tattvaṁ harim iha paramaṁ
sarva-śaktiṁ rasābdhiṁ
tad bhinnaṁśaṁś ca jīvān prakṛti-kavalitān
tad-vimuktāṁś ca bhāvād
bhedābheda-prakāśaṁ sakalam api hareḥ
sādhanaṁ śuddha-bhaktiṁ
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janān gauracandraḥ svayaṁ saḥ

The message of the Vedas received through *guru-paramparā* is called *āmnāya*. The Vedas and *smṛti-śāstra* (such as *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*) which follow the Vedic version have been accepted as authoritative proof, as have different types of evidence such as direct perception, inasmuch as they confirm the Vedic version. From these sources of evidence, the following essential truths are established: (1) Hari is the Supreme Truth, (2) He is *sarva-śaktimān*, endowed with all potencies, (3) He is *akhila-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, the ocean of all nectarean transcendental mellows, (4) two kinds of *jīvas*, namely liberated and conditioned (*mukta* and *baddha*), are His separated expansions (*vibhinnāṁśa-tattva*), (5) the conditioned souls are under the control of *māyā*, (6) the *mukta-jīvas* are liberated from the influence of *māyā*, (7) everything in existence, whether conscious or unconscious, is a manifestation of Śrī Hari and is simultaneously and inconceivably one with and different from Him, (8) *bhakti* is the only *sādhana*, or means to attain the goal, and (9) love for Kṛṣṇa (*kṛṣṇa-prīti*) is the only objective (*sādhya*).

Svayam Bhagavān Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has given these teachings on the ten fundamental truths for the faithful living beings. Of these, the first is the principle of evidence, *pramāṇa-tattva*, and the remaining nine are *prameya-tattva*, the subject that is established by *pramāṇa-tattva*. The ten fundamental principles are analyzed here as follows:

Pramāṇa-tattva

When the Śrutis (Vedas), which are called *brahma-vidyā*, are received through the medium of hearing from the *guru-paramparā* coming from Lord Brahmā, the creator of the universe, who is the dear servant of Śrī Bhagavān, that knowledge is called *āmnāya*. The four Vedas, the Itihāsas (histories), the Purāṇas, Upaniṣads, *ślokas*, *sūtras* and *anuvyākhyās* (commentaries) – these are all included in *āmnāya*. Here we should understand Itihāsas to mean the *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata*. The eighteen *mahā-purāṇas*, headed by *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, are indicated by the word 'Purāṇa'. 'Upaniṣad' refers to the principal body of Upaniṣads such as *Īśa*, *Kena* and *Kaṭha*. *Śloka* refers to the collection of verses composed by the sages in metres such as *anuṣṭup*[1], and *sūtra* means the *sūtras* expressing the purpose of the Vedas written by the prominent *tattva-ācāryas*. Superior to the *sūtra* literatures are *vyākhyā*, or commentaries, and the other works written by those *ācāryas*. All these are identified by the term *āmnāya*. The principal

1 Editor: the metre most common in the *Bhagavad-gītā*

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meaning of the word *āmnāya* is Veda. The same idea has been expressed in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Ādi-līlā* 7.132):

> *svataḥ-pramāṇa veda—pramāṇa-śiromaṇi*
> *lakṣaṇā karile svataḥ-pramāṇatā-hāni*
>
> The self-evident Vedic literature is the topmost evidence of all, but if it is interpreted, its self-evident nature is forfeited.

The self-evident Veda is the crest jewel of evidence

The evidence of the Vedic literature (*veda-pramāṇa*) is also known as *śruti-pramāṇa*, or *śabda-pramāṇa*, the evidence of transcendental sound. Thus the Vedas, the Purāṇas, Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Mahābhārata*, the Upaniṣads, *Vedānta-sūtra* and literature such as the commentaries written by Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* are called *āpta-vākya*, or *āmnāya-vākya*. Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī established beyond a doubt the authority of *āpta-vākya* or *śabda-pramāṇa*, and went on to prove the authority of the Purāṇas as well. He ultimately established that *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the crest jewel of all sources of evidence. Using the same criteria by which he established *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam's* supreme authenticity, he has also validated the authoritative literatures revealed by Brahmā, Nārada, Vyāsa, Śukadeva, and after them in sequence Vijayadhvaja, Brahmaṇya Tīrtha, Vyāsatīrtha and so on, to *tattva-guru* Śrīman Madhvācārya.

From this it is clearly evident that the Brahma *sampradāya* is the *guru-praṇālī*, the *paramparā*, or spiritual hierarchy, of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, who have taken shelter of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Kavi Karṇapura Gosvāmī has established this very opinion in his *Gaura-gaṇoddeśa-dīpikā* and Śrī Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī has described this *guru-paramparā* in his *Saṁskāra-dīpikā*. Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, the commentator on *Vedānta-sūtra*, has also accepted the same spiritual hierarchy. Our revered *gurupāda-padma*, Śrī Ācārya Kesarī, has supported this opinion with various logical arguments and scriptural evidence in all of his books, articles and especially in his essay entitled *Acintya-bhedābheda-tattva*. Śrīla Gurupāda-padma's role in protecting his *sampradāya* is very significant at this present time.

The conclusions of ordinary human beings, being conditioned souls, are prone to four defects – *bhrama*, *pramāda*, *vipralipsā* and *karaṇāpāṭava*.[2]

Even greatly learned personalities are unable to give up these faults when they reflect upon that which is transcendental, or beyond the jurisdiction of the senses, so their opinions are not flawless or reliable evidence. This means that the statements of the Vedas are the only authentic evidence regarding subject matters that are beyond the jurisdiction of material sense perception, because their origin is divine (*apauruṣeya*), and not human. Direct perception (*pratyakṣa*), hypothesis (*anumāna*), comparison (*upamāna*), history and other types of proof are useful when they are subordinate to the Vedic statements (*śabda-pramāṇa*). Then only can they help to a limited degree and be accepted as

2 *Bhrama* (mistakes): the conditioned soul contemplates with his imperfect senses and concludes that a temporary object is eternal. *Pramāda* (illusion): inattention or distraction, such as to not hear a song, even though played nearby. *Vipralipsā* (cheating propensity): the desire to cheat others, such as refraining from giving knowledge to others even though capable of doing so. *Karaṇāpāṭava* (imperfect senses): being unable to obtain proper knowledge of an object despite endeavouring to do so.

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evidence; otherwise they cannot be accepted as evidence at all. However, the fully independent and omnipotent Supreme Lord Himself appears in the pure hearts of perfected sages and Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* who are situated in the state of complete trance, and He manifests perfect knowledge in the form of Veda. Thus the authenticity of the self-manifest Veda, which is the embodiment of knowledge, is always spotless and reliable in all respects.

Only Kṛṣṇa is parama-tattva

Kṛṣṇa alone is Svayam Bhagavān, the Original Supreme Personality of Godhead, and He is the shelter of all. Śrī Kṛṣṇa alone has been called the *pūrṇa-tattva* or *parama-tattva*, the complete and topmost truth, throughout the Vedas, the Upaniṣads, *Bhagavad-gītā*, the Purāṇas headed by the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, and the Āgamas. He is also *sarveśvareśvara*, the Lord and controller of all other controlling agents. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa has been established as Svayam Bhagavān and *advaya-jñāna para-tattva* in the verses *kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam* (1.3.28) and *vadanti tat tattva-vidas tattvaṁ yaj jñānam advayam* (1.2.11). Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the non-dual Supreme Absolute Truth, has three *svarūpas*, or features. These are *brahma*, Paramātmā and Bhagavān. Only Śrī Kṛṣṇa is Svayam Bhagavān. His bodily lustre, the light emanating from His limbs, is called *nirviśeṣa-brahma*, the impersonal effulgence. Paramātmā is Bhagavān's partial expansion who dwells within all *jīvas* in the form of the witness of their actions. Devotees of Bhagavān, who have taken shelter of pure *bhakti-yoga* and attained the *darśana* of Bhagavān, see His beautiful, fully transcendental form composed of eternity, knowledge and bliss.

premāñjana-cchurita-bhakti-vilocanena
santaḥ sadaiva hṛdayeṣu vilokayanti

Brahma-saṁhitā (5.38)

Saintly persons, whose eyes of devotion are smeared with the salve of *prema*, always behold Śrī Kṛṣṇa in their hearts.

Jñānīs see the Supreme Truth in the form of *nirviśeṣa-brahma*. Their eyes cannot see Bhagavān's divine form because they are blinded by the dazzling effulgence of His limbs. Those who worship the Supreme Truth by taking shelter of the path of *yoga* realize Him in the form of Paramātmā. However, the devotees of Bhagavān see His *sac-cid-ānanda* form by the influence of *bhakti*. Vision of Bhagavān is the complete and perfect view, whereas the vision of *brahma* and Paramātmā is partial. The Vedas, Upaniṣads and Purāṇas prove that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is Svayam Bhagavān Śrī Hari:

(a)

apaśyaṁ gopām anipadyamānamā
ca parā ca pathibhiś carantam
sa sadhrīcīḥ sa viṣūcīr vasāna
āvarīvarti bhuvaneṣv antaḥ

Ṛg Veda (1.22.164.31)

I saw a boy who appeared in the dynasty of cowherds and who is never annihilated. He wanders on many paths, sometimes close by and sometimes far away. Sometimes He is adorned with many-coloured garments and sometimes with garments of one colour. In this way He repeatedly exhibits His manifest and unmanifest pastimes.

(b)

śyāmāc chabalaṁ prapadye
śabalāc chayāmaṁ prapadye

Chāndogya Upaniṣad (8.13.1)

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By service to Kṛṣṇa, one attains the transcendental abode of divine bliss, which is full of wonderful pleasure pastimes, and within that transcendental abode of wonders, one attains Kṛṣṇa.

The word *śyāma* means 'by Kṛṣṇa'. The use of *kṛṣṇa*, or black, here conveys the conception of the *para-tattva* in its *nirguṇa* aspect, when it is without material qualities and can thus be represented as colourless. Conversely, the word *śabala* means *gaura*, which signifies that it is equipped with a myriad of colours, or the aggregate of all colours. In other words, the name of the *para-tattva* endowed with all transcendental qualities is 'Gaura'. Therefore the confidential meaning of this *mantra* is that Gaura is attained by *kṛṣṇa-bhajana*, and Kṛṣṇa is attained by *gaura-bhajana*.

(c)

ete cāṁśa-kalāḥ puṁsaḥ
kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.3.28)

All incarnations, beginning with Rāma and Nṛsiṁha, are the plenary portions (*aṁśa*) or portions of the plenary portions (*kalā*) of the Supreme Person Bhagavān. Only Kṛṣṇa, however, is the original Svayam Bhagavān.

(d)

mattaḥ parataraṁ nānyat
kiñcid asti dhanañjaya

Bhagavad-gītā (7.7)

O Arjuna, there is nothing superior to Me.

(e)

eko vaśī sarvagaḥ kṛṣṇa īḍya
eko 'pi san bahudhā yo vibhāti

Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad (1.21)

The one controller of all, the all-pervading, unparalleled *para-brahma* Śrī Kṛṣṇa is worshipful for the demigods, humans and all living beings. Although He is one, He is manifest in many forms by the influence of His own inconceivable potency, and enjoys Himself by performing a variety of pastimes.

(f)

vedaiś ca sarvair aham eva vedyaḥ

Bhagavad-gītā (15.15)

I am the only subject to be known in all the Vedas.

Some people harbour the doubt that Kṛṣṇa's name is not to be found anywhere in the Vedas, but this idea is not correct. It is only Śrī Kṛṣṇa who has been represented in the Vedas, in some places by the primary, or dictionary, usage (*abhidā-vṛtti*); in others by secondary, or the figurative, sense (*lakṣaṇā-vṛtti*); in some places by direct interpretation (*anvaya*); and in other places by indirect means of deliberation (*vyatireka*). We have already shown this by the *śruti-mantras* such as *apaśyaṁ gopām anipadyamānamā* and *śyāmāc chabalam*. In *Ṛg Veda* (1.21.154.6), Bhagavān's pastimes have been described in this way:

tā vāṁ vāstūnyuśmasi gamadhyai yatra gāvo
bhūriśṛṅgā ayāsaḥ
atrāha tad urugāyasya vṛṣṇaḥ paramaṁ
padam avabhāti bhūri

I desire to attain Your (Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa's) abodes, wherein the acclaimed *kāmadhenus*, wish-fulfilling cows, have excellent horns and are capable of bestowing my heart's desired wealth. This supreme abode of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the fulfiller of the desires of His devotees, is illuminated to the fullest extent.

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"The descriptions of the potencies of *para-tattva* are found throughout the Vedas and other scriptures of divine origin. Great liberated personalities who accept the essence of everything have supported the conclusion that *śakti* is one *tattva*, and *śaktimān* is another *tattva*. These two principles are distinct, and at the same time they are also eternally inseparable."

This Vedic *mantra* describes the charm and beauty of Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa and of His beloved cows. There are numerous places in the Vedas in which descriptions such as this are primary, i.e., according to standard dictionary usage. Elsewhere, Kṛṣṇa has been described taking the secondary sense, *lakṣaṇā-vṛtti*: *ayam ātmā sarveṣāṁ bhūtānāṁ madhu ... ayamātmā sarveṣāṁ adhipatiḥ sarveṣāṁ bhūtānāṁ rājā* (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 2.5.14, 15). These *mantras* allude to Śrī Kṛṣṇa indirectly, saying that He is the honey, the master and the king of all states of existence. Here Kṛṣṇa is indicated by the word *ātmā*. This has also been stated in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.14.55): "*kṛṣṇam enam avehi tvam ātmānam akhilātmanām* – O King, know that Kṛṣṇa is the Soul of all souls."

Śrī Kṛṣṇa is *para-brahma*, ultimate bliss (*paramānanda*), the complete *brahma* and Svayam Bhagavān. This has been proclaimed clearly in verses of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* such as *gūḍhaṁ paraṁ brahma manuṣya-liṅgam* (7.10.48), *yan-mitraṁ paramānandaṁ pūrṇaṁ brahma sanātanam* (10.14.32) and *kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam* (1.3.28). *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* (4.11.4) has also determined that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is *para-brahma* by conclusive statements such as *yatrāvatīrṇaṁ kṛṣṇākhyaṁ paraṁ brahma narākṛti*. Similarly, in *Bhagavad-gītā* (14.27) we find, *brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhāham*. Our Gosvāmīs have given evidence from the *śāstras* supporting the conclusion that Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the ultimate aspect of *para-tattva*. He is the source of all incarnations and of all expansions such as Rāma and Nṛsiṁha, and He is also the basis of Paramātmā and *brahma*.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa is sarva-śaktimān, the possessor of all potencies

The descriptions of the potencies of *para-tattva* are found throughout the Vedas and other scriptures of divine origin. Great liberated personalities who accept the essence of everything have supported the conclusion that *śakti* (potency) is one *tattva* (principle), and *śaktimān* (the possessor and master of potency) is another *tattva*. These two principles are distinct, and at the same time they are also eternally inseparable. Mortal men cannot realize the confidential relationship between *śakti* and *śaktimān*, because their thoughts are always limited. Actually, although the object and the potency of that object are different, they are also indivisible, meaning that they are non-different. This difference and non-difference is simultaneous. Therefore Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His followers, the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, have accepted the relationship of *acintya-bhedābheda*, inconceivable and simultaneous oneness and difference, between the object and the potency of the object.

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In his Sandarbhas, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī has used scriptural evidence and incontrovertible reasoning to prove the *acintya-bhedābheda* relationship between the potent and the potency. In *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Ādi-līlā* 4.96–98) it has been said that Śrīmatī Rādhikā is the complete energy and Kṛṣṇa is the complete energetic source, yet there is no difference between Them. Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are inherently non-different, in just the same way that musk and its fragrance, or fire and its heat, cannot be separated from each other. Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are manifest in two forms just to taste the *rasa* of Their pastimes:

rādhā—pūrṇa-śakti, kṛṣṇa—pūrṇa-śaktimān
dui vastu bheda nāhi, śāstra-paramāṇa

mrgamada, tāra gandha—yaiche aviccheda
agni, jvālāte—yaiche kabhu nāhi bheda

rādhā-kṛṣṇa aiche sadā ekai svarūpa
līlā-rasa āsvādite dhare dui rūpa

This conclusion has also been established in Vedānta: "*śakti-śaktimator abhedaḥ* – there is no difference between the potent and the potency." From the consideration of *vastu-tattva* (the principle of factual substance), there is no substance other than Śrī Kṛṣṇa, which is why the scriptures describe Him as *advaya-tattva,* the non-dual Reality. The same *advaya-tattva* is seen in three ways by candidates of different qualifications according to the level of their worship. Those who only cultivate *jñāna* imagine *brahma* to be a state of being which is opposite to the inert material existence; in other words, they conceive of *brahma* as a variety-less, formless, powerless and inactive spirit. However, this does not make clear what is the *svarūpa*, or real nature, of the object itself. Those who search for the *advaya-tattva* through *buddhi-yoga,* the meditational process, see Paramātmā as the witness of the *ātmā,* a realization which is not contrary to the individual nature of the *ātmā.* Finally, those who see the factual substance through pure, unadulterated *bhakti-yoga* directly attain that *advaya-tattva* and see Svayam Bhagavān in the form of the Supreme Reality, endowed with complete opulences, sweetness and potencies.

The realizations of *brahma* and Paramātmā carry some material designation. In other words, *brahma* realization comes from a negative conception of the illusory designations and Paramātmā realization from a positive conception. However, the vision of the spiritual form of Bhagavān is attained only by untainted spiritual eyes. The factual substance is the form of Bhagavān and devotion to Him is the *śakti-tattva.*

The vision of Bhagavān without potency (*śakti*) is only *nirviśeṣa-brahma.* Some believe that *brahma-darśana* is the ultimate realization, but this opinion reflects their own preconceived inclination; *darśana* of *brahma* which is variety-less and without potency can only be a partial vision or experience, because in scriptures such as *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* we see the use of words such as *para-brahma. Brahma* and *para-brahma* do not have the same meaning. In *Bhagavad-gītā* and other scriptures, Śrī Kṛṣṇa has been called the basis of *brahma,* so Svayam Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa alone is the intrinsic reality and *brahma* is only His non-differential manifestation, or the radiance of His form. Paramātmā is also a partial expansion of Bhagavān. In other words, it can be said that *brahma* realization is the dry and impotent experience of the non-dual Absolute Truth (*advaya-jñāna tattva-vastu*). Clear knowledge of the Supreme Being who has entered within inert

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matter in a subtle form is Paramātmā realization, and the complete experience of the *advaya-jñāna* with all distinct characteristics is Bhagavān realization.

Realization of Bhagavān is also of two types: *aiśvarya-pradhāna,* realization in which reverence inspired by knowledge of His opulence is prominent, and *mādhurya-pradhāna,* a realization in which sweetness is prominent. The *aiśvarya-pradhāna* feature is Śrīpati Nārāyaṇa, the husband of the goddess of fortune, and the *mādhurya-pradhāna* feature is realized as Rādhānātha Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the beloved of Śrī Rādhā.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the one and only *advaya-tattva-vastu.* He includes both *brahma* and Paramātmā; by His sweetness He completely covers all of Śrī Nārāyaṇa's opulence; and He is possessed of all transcendental energy. This has been described in *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (6.8):

na tasya kāryaṁ karaṇaṁ ca vidyate
na tat samaś cābhyadhikaś ca dṛśyate
parāsya śaktir vividhaiva śrūyate
svābhāvikī jñāna-bala-kriyā ca

The activities of that *para-brahma* are not material because His senses, such as hands and feet, are not material. Therefore, His actions are transcendental *līlā.* Because of His spiritual body, He is omnipresent at every moment. It is therefore seen that no other is equal to Him, what to speak of being greater than Him. It is heard that Parameśvara has a variety of divine potencies of which three are prominent, namely, His *jñāna-śakti, bala-śakti* and *kriyā-śakti.* These three potencies are known as *cit-* or *samvit-śakti, sat-* or *sandhinī-śakti,* and *ānanda-* or *hlādinī-śakti,* respectively.

This *parā-śakti* of Bhagavān is also manifested in another three ways, namely as *cit-śakti, jīva-śakti* and *māyā-śakti. Cit-śakti,* which is also called the *svarūpa-* or *antaraṅgā-śakti* (internal potency), manifests the abodes of the Lord (the *dhāmas*) such as Vaikuṇṭha, Goloka and Vraja. *Māyā-śakti* is called *bahiraṅgā-śakti,* or the external potency. All the mundane worlds or inert material creations have been manifested from this potency. Its expanded majesty is exhibited as unlimited universes. *Jīva-śakti* is also called *taṭasthā-śakti,* from which the aggregate of unlimited *jīvas* has been manifested. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the shelter, or abode, of these three *śaktis.*

Kṛṣṇa has one naturally inherent potency called *parā-śakti.* This is composed of variegated pleasure pastimes and ever-increasing varieties of bliss. Although this *śakti* has unlimited spheres of influence, among them only *cit-śakti, jīva-śakti* and *māyā-śakti* are perceived by the *jīvas.* The descriptions of the three aspects of this *parā-śakti* are found in many places in the Vedas, such as: *parāsya śaktir vividhaiva śrūyate / svābhāvikī jñāna-bala-kriyā ca* (*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 6.8).

In *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* (6.7.61) it is also found:

viṣṇu-śaktiḥ parā proktā
kṣetrajñākhyā tathā parā
avidyā-karma-saṁjñānyā
tṛtīyā śaktir iṣyate

The potency of Viṣṇu is of three types – *parā, kṣetrajñā* and *avidyā.* The name of Viṣṇu's *parā-śakti* is *cit-śakti, kṣetrajñā* is *jīva-śakti* and *avidyā-śakti* is called *māyā.*

Bhagavad-gītā 7.5 states:

apareyam itas tv anyāṁ
prakṛtiṁ viddhi me parām

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jīva-bhūtāṁ mahā-bāho
yayedaṁ dhāryate jagat

However, this inanimate material nature, which has eight divisions (earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intelligence and false ego), is an inferior nature. O mighty-armed Arjuna, know that I have another energy known as the *jīva*, which is superior and which accepts this material world for the purpose of enjoying the fruits of his action.

Kṛṣṇa's *svarūpa*, or form, is composed of eternality (*sat*), knowledge (*cit*) and bliss (*ānanda*). Therefore His *svarūpa-śakti* is manifest in three forms. From the *ānanda* portion comes *hlādinī-śakti*, from *sat* comes *sandhinī* and from *cit* comes *saṁvit*. *Saṁvit-śakti* is also called *jñāna-śakti*. *Hlādinī-śakti* makes Kṛṣṇa joyful (*āhlādit*), which is why its name is *hlādinī*. By this *śakti* Kṛṣṇa, the embodiment of bliss, tastes pleasure, and enables the devotees to also taste transcendental happiness. The essence of this *hlādinī* is *prema*, a phenomenon composed entirely of transcendental *rasa*, and is the embodiment of bliss itself. The concentrated essence of *prema* is called *mahābhāva*. The embodiment of this *mahābhāva* is Śrīmatī Rādhikā. This is a summary introduction to the identity of *śakti*.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa is akhila-rasāmṛta-sindhu, the ocean of all ambrosial mellows

Para-tattva, the embodiment of non-dual knowledge, is Himself *rasa*, transcendental mellow. Those who have had no experience of *rasa-tattva* cannot realize the Absolute Truth in the slightest. In *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (2.7) it has been said:

raso vai saḥ, rasaṁ hyevāyaṁ labdhvānandī bhavati, ko hyevānyāt kaḥ prāṇyāt, yadeṣa ākāśa ānando na syāt, eṣa hyevānandayāti

Para-tattva Himself is *rasa*. On attaining that *rasa*, the *jīva* experiences true bliss (*ānanda*). If that undivided Reality were not the embodiment of *ānanda* in the form of *rasa*, then who could remain alive and who would endeavour to live? He alone gives pleasure to all.

Prior to Svayam Bhagavān Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, different Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* had established, preached and propagated *bhakti-tattva*. However, only Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, being empowered by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, further developed that *bhakti-tattva* into *bhakti-rasa*. He described this subject elaborately in his *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* and *Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi*. He explained that the *bhakti-lātā-bīja* in the form of *kṛṣṇa-sevā-vāsanā*, the inclination to serve Kṛṣṇa, develops sequentially from *śraddhā* to *niṣṭhā*, *ruci* and *āsakti*. When it is transformed into *rati*, it is called *sthāyībhāva*. When the four *bhāvas*, namely, *vibhāva*, *anubhāva*, *sāttvika* and *vyābhicārī*, join in a combined form in this *sthāyībhāva*, then *rati* in the form of *sthāyībhāva* is transformed into a relishable and supremely astonishing condition called *bhakti-rasa*.

The movement governing both mundane *rasa* and pure spiritual *rasa* are the same. When the application of the *sthāyībhāva* is in relation to Bhagavān, there is pure spiritual *bhakti-rasa*, whereas when *sthāyībhāva* is in relation to material sense enjoyment, there is insignificant, mundane *rasa*. Where the *sthāyībhāva* is applied in relation to non-differentiated knowledge there is *nirviśeṣa-brahma-rasa*, and where it pertains

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to *yoga*, there is *paramātmā-rasa*. Before *śraddhā* develops into *rati*, the endeavour for *rasa* from the combination of the constituent *bhāvas* such as *vibhāva*, results in incomplete, fragmented *rasa*. Mundane *rasa* is thoroughly rejectable and insignificant. Only spiritual *rasa* is being considered herein.

Rati, in the form of *sthāyībhāva*, is the foundation of *rasa*. *Rasa* comes from the union of its four constituent ingredients, namely, *vibhāva*, *anubhāva*, *sāttvika* and *vyabhicārī*. *Vibhāva* is of two types: *ālambana* and *uddīpana*. *Ālambana* is also divided into two: *āśraya* and *viṣaya*. The possessor of *sthāyībhāva* is called the *āśraya* (abode) of *rasa*, and the one towards whom *sthāyībhāva* is directed is the *viṣaya* (object) of *rasa*. In transcendental *rasa*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the only object (*viṣaya*) of *rasa* and the worshiper is the abode (*āśraya*) of *rasa*. The qualities of the worshipful object and objects in relation to Him are called *uddīpana*. Dancing, singing, yawning, hiccupping and so on are expressions of the *bhāva* within the heart, and are therefore called *anubhāvas*. Bodily transformations such as becoming stunned, perspiration and horripilation are called *sāttvika-bhāvas* because they are manifested from pure spiritual existence, or *sattva*. There are thirty-three types of *vyabhicārī-bhāvas*, such as self-disparagement, despondency and humility. These *bhāvas* move in the direction of the ocean of the *sthāyībhāva* and increase it. Therefore they are called *vyabhicārī*.

Rasa is of two types, namely, primary (*mukhya*) and secondary (*gauṇa*). The five *mukhya-rasas* are *śānta* (passive adoration), *dāsya* (servitude), *sakhya* (friendship), *vātsalya* (parental love) and *madhurya* (amorous love). The seven secondary *rasas* are *hāsya* (comedy), *adbhuta* (astonishment), *raudra* (anger), *vīra* (chivalry), *karuṇa* (pathos), *bhayānaka* (horror) and *vībhatsa* (disgust).

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has given a fresh and comprehensive definition of *bhakti*:

> *anyābhilāṣitā-śūnyaṁ*
> *jñāna-karmādy anāvṛtam*
> *ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānuśīlanaṁ*
> *bhaktir uttamā*
>
> *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.1.11)

> The cultivation of activities which are meant exclusively for the pleasure of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, or in other words, the uninterrupted flow of service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, performed through all endeavours of the body, mind and speech, and through the expressions of various spiritual sentiments (*bhāvas*), which is not covered by *jñāna* (knowledge aimed at impersonal liberation) and *karma* (reward-seeking activity), and which is devoid of all desires other than the aspiration to bring happiness to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, is called *uttama-bhakti*, pure devotional service.

By performing *sādhana* for this type of *bhakti*, *rati* is awakened. When *rati* becomes more condensed it is called *prema*. As that *prema* matures and thickens, it is known sucessively as *sneha*, *māna*, *praṇaya*, *rāga*, *anurāga*, *bhāva* and *mahābhāva*. *Kṛṣṇa-rati* is also of five types, arising from five divisions of devotees: *śānta*, *dāsya*, *sakhya*, *vātsalya* and *madhura*. Among these, *madhura-rati* is the best.

Kṛṣṇa-prema is also of two types – *aiśvarya-miśrita* and *kevala*, or pure, *prema*. The *prema* by which one considers Kṛṣṇa to be the Supreme Godhead endowed with six opulences and oneself to be destitute, low and insignificant is called *aiśvarya-miśrita*, or mixed with knowledge

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of Kṛṣṇa's opulences. The *prema* that we see in the material world is mainly this mixed *prema*, which does not control Bhagavān. *Kevala*, or pure, *prema* is that pure affection through which one considers Kṛṣṇa to be one's son, friend or sweetheart, exactly as in an intimate worldly relationship.

Kṛṣṇa is only controlled by this *kevala-prema*. Yaśodā-maiyā scolds Kṛṣṇa and binds Him by her pure parental affection. In their pure *sakhya-bhāva*, Kṛṣṇa's friends climb on His shoulders. The charming *gopīs* of Vraja consider Kṛṣṇa their most dear one, and when they rebuke Him, their words of reproach are even more pleasing to Śrī Kṛṣṇa than the Vedic hymns sung by Brahmā. If Vrajendra-nandana Śyāmasundara had not descended to this world, then the subjects of these three elevated levels of *rasa*, namely, *sakhya*, *vātsalya* and *madhura*, would not be found and the material world would remain deprived of these elevated sentiments. Specifically, if Śrī Kṛṣṇa had not mercifully manifested His cowherd boy pastimes, which madden the world with love, then no one would even be able to realize that Parameśvara is the object of *madhura-rasa*.

Among Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, *vraja-līlā* is the best of all, because in this very pastime the highest benefit of all the *jīvas* is obtained in regard to *rasa*. Logicians and worldly moralists cannot touch the glories of *kṛṣṇa-līlā*. *Vraja-līlā* is composed entirely of *rasa*, and those who can carry this *līlā* in their hearts are very fortunate. Only those fortunate devotees who have tasted the sweetness of *vraja-līlā* can know its sweetness. It is impossible to enter this subject by logic, morality, knowledge, *yoga*, religion or irreligion.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the embodiment of *rasa*, is the Supreme Reality, or *para-brahma*. At the same time, He is supremely *rasika*, expert in relishing the mellows of love. Therefore, although He is one, in order to taste *rasa*, He is eternally situated in four natural forms by the influence of His own inconceivable potency. Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī has described these four natural forms in his *Bhagavat-sandarbha* (14): "*ekam eva taṁ paramaṁ tattvaṁ svābhāvikācintya-śaktyā sarvadaiva svarūpa-tad-rūpa-vaibhava-jīva-pradhāna-rūpeṇa caturddhāvatiṣṭhate, sūryāntara-maṇḍala-stha-teja iva, maṇḍala-tad-bahirgata-raśmi-tat-praticchavi-raśmyādi-rūpeṇa – Parama-tattva* is one. He is equipped with His inconceivable natural potency. With the assistance of that potency, He is eternally manifest in four forms: His original form (*svarūpa*); His personal splendour, which includes His abode, eternal associates and expansions such as Lord Nārāyaṇa (*tad-rūpa-vaibhava*); the living entities (*jīvas*); and the unmanifest state of the three modes of material nature (*pradhāna*). There are some simple examples which partially illustrate this point. The four features may be compared to the effulgence situated in the interior of the sun planet, the sun globe, the rays of the sun emanating out from the globe, and a remote reflection of the sun, respectively."

In the scriptures that describe the essential purports of the Vedas such as *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the spiritual authorities (*mahājanas*) have researched the pure *rasa* within Kṛṣṇa. Great sages such as the Catuḥsana (the four Kumāras) headed by Sanaka Kumāra, as well as Śiva, Vyāsa and Nārada have described the *rasa* within Kṛṣṇa's supernatural pastimes in their own respective scriptures, having realized it in trance. But only Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has manifested this nectarean *śrī kṛṣṇa-rasa* on the Earth. Before Him and until today, no one has been able to do this. Therefore, in *Śrī Caitanya-*

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candrāmṛta (130), Śrī Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī has stated quite appropriately:

prema-nāmādbhutārthaḥ śravaṇa-patha-gataḥ
kasya nāmnāṁ mahimnaḥ
ko vettā kasya vṛndāvana-vipina-
mahā-mādhurīṣu praveśaḥ
ko vā jānāti rādhāṁ parama-rasa-
camatkāra-mādhurya-sīmā-
mekaś caitanya-candraḥ parama-karuṇayā
sarvam āviścakāra

O brother, who had even heard of the name of the ultimate goal of life, called *prema*? Who knew the glories of *śrī harināma*? Who had entered into the wonderful sweetness of Śrī Vṛndāvana? And indeed, who knew Śrīmatī Rādhikā, the *parā-śakti* (transcendental potency) as the pinnacle of the supremely astonishing *mādhurya-rasa*? Only the most merciful Śrī Caitanya-candra has uncovered all these truths out of compassion for the *jīvas*.

The jīva is the vibhinnāṁśa-tattva of Śrī Hari

In the Vedic scriptures, the *jīvātmā* has been called the *vibhinnāṁśa*, separated part, of the Supreme Lord. Therefore, the *jīva* is constitutionally a servant of Kṛṣṇa. We have already mentioned that the one *parā-śakti*, or *svarūpa-śakti*, is manifested in three forms: *cit-śakti*, *jīva-śakti* and *māyā-śakti*. When *sac-cid-ānanda para-tattva* Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is complete in six opulences, is equipped only with His *jīva-śakti*, then His expansion is called *vibhinnāṁśa-jīva*. Alternatively, when *sac-cid-ānanda* Bhagavān is invested with all His potencies, such as *svarūpa-śakti*, then His expansion is called a personal expansion (*svāṁśa*). There is no difference in principle between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His personal expansions such as Śrī Baladeva, Paravyoma-pati Nārāyaṇa (the Lord of the spiritual sky), Śrī Rāma, Śrī Nṛsiṁhadeva and the other incarnations. Only when we consider the degree of manifestation of *śakti* and *rasa* can we understand that Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the last limit of the Supreme Truth, the summit of all opulence (*aiśvarya*) and sweetness (*mādhurya*), and the origin of all incarnations (*avatārī*) and of all expansions (*aṁśī*). Śrī Rāma, Nṛsiṁha, etc., are called His incarnations (*avatāras*), and Śrī Baladeva and Paravyoma-pati Nārāyaṇa are called His *vaibhava-prakāśa*, or manifestations of His opulences. These are all *bhagavat-tattva* and the masters of *māyā*. However, this cannot be said in relation to the individual souls (*jīvātmā*), who are a transformation of Bhagavān's *jīva-śakti*, or *taṭasthā-śakti*.

In the scriptures, Bhagavān has been described as undivided, immutable and without transformation. If the *jīvas* were direct expansions of Bhagavān, then He would have to be transformable, or mutable. However, to call *para-brahma* mutable, or divided, is not in accordance with scripture. In *śāstra* the *jīva* has been accepted as the transformation of the *śakti* of *para-brahma*. On account of the non-difference of *brahma* and His *śakti*, the *jīva* has been called the *aṁśa*, separated particle, of *brahma*, as it has been stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (15.7): *mamaivāṁśo jīva-loke jīva-bhūtaḥ sanātanaḥ*. However, after evaluating various scriptural statements, the Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* who follow Śrīman Mahāprabhu have pronounced the *jīva* to be a transformation of *śakti*.

It is sometimes seen that a special jewel or a person accomplished in chanting particular *mantras* can manifest many other substances,

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although the jewel or the person who knows *mantras*, themselves remain untransformed. This is because the substances are manifested by their potency. In the same way, the *cit-śakti* of *para-brahma* Śrī Kṛṣṇa manifests the transcendental abodes such as the unlimited Vaikuṇṭha planets, Goloka Vṛndāvana and all their spiritual paraphernalia; the *jīva-śakti*, or *taṭasthā-śakti*, manifests unlimited *jīvas*; and *māyā-śakti* manifests unlimited mundane universes. Still, *brahma* remains immutable, undivided and pure. The *jīva* is a portion (*aṁśa*) of the potency of *brahma*, and not a direct fragmented expansion. That is why he is called *vibhinnāṁśa*, or separated expansion. It has been stated in *Śrī Nārada-pañcarātra*: "*yat taṭastham tu cid-rūpaṁ sva-saṁvedyād vinirgatam* – Being a particle of consciousness and an emanation from the *cit-śakti*, the living being is marginal, or *taṭasthā*."

Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī further clarifies *taṭasthā-śakti* in *Paramātma-sandarbha* (37): "*taṭasthatvañca māyā-śakty-atītatvāt, asyāvidyā-parābhavādi-rūpeṇa doṣeṇa paramātmano lepābhāvāc cobhaya-koṭāv apraveśāt. tasya tac-chaktitve saty api paramātmanas tal-lepābhāvaś ca yathā kvacid eka-deśa-sthe raśmau chāyayā tiraskṛte 'pi sūryasyātiraskārastadvat.*" The meaning is: *Jīva-śakti*, which is called *taṭasthā*, is separate from *māyā-śakti*; therefore it does not come in the category of *māyā*. However, the *jīva* is controlled by *avidyā*, ignorance, so he cannot be on the same level as Paramātmā, who remains ever uncontaminated by ignorance. Although *avidyā* is a *śakti* of Paramātmā, it does not cover Him, just as the sun itself is not covered when a cloud obscures its rays in one particular region.

It has also been stated as such in the *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (4.3.9): *"tasya vā etasya puruṣasya dve eva sthāne bhavataḥ, idaṁ ca paraloka-sthānaṁ ca, sandhyaṁ tṛtīyaṁ svapna-sthānam, tasmin sandhye sthāne tiṣṭhannete ubhe sthāne paśyatīdaṁ ca paraloka-sthānaṁ ca ...* – That *jīva-puruṣa* has two positions, namely, the inanimate material world and also the spiritual world, about which he should enquire. The *jīva* is situated in a third position, which is a dream-like condition, *svapna-sthāna* (*taṭasthā*), and is the juncture between these two. Being situated at the place where the two worlds meet, he sees both the inert and the spiritual world."

"*Jīva-śakti*, which is called *taṭasthā*, is separate from *māyā-śakti*; therefore it does not come in the category of *māyā*. However, the *jīva* is controlled by *avidyā*, ignorance, so he cannot be on the same level as Paramātmā, who remains ever uncontaminated by ignorance."

Even though all the *jīvas* that manifest from the *taṭasthā-śakti* have arisen from Parameśvara, they are still separately existing individual entities. The *jīva* is compared to an atomic particle of the sun's rays or to a spark of a fire. This has been stated clearly in the *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (2.1.20): *"... yathā 'gneḥ kṣudrā visphuliṅgā vyuccaranty evamevāsmādātmānaḥ ... sarvāṇi bhūtāni vyuccaranti ...* – as sparks emanate from a fire, similarly the aggregate of *jīvas* is manifested from the Supreme Soul, Śrī Kṛṣṇa."

From this it is clear that the *jīvas*, being atomic conscious particles and *vibhinnāṁśa-tattva*, are

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subordinate to the original *ātmā*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. They are eligible for both the spiritual and the material worlds because of their marginal nature. Being situated on the borderline between the two, if they look in the direction of the *cit-jagat*, the potency of *yogamāyā* empowers them and they become engaged in the service of Bhagavān in the spiritual world. However, if they look in the direction of the illusory material world, the desire to enjoy matter arises within them. Then, turning away from the spiritual sun, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, they become attracted by *māyā*. *Māyā*, who is very close by, immediately gives them a gross body with which to strive for enjoyment, and casts them into the current of birth and death in material existence.

The *jīvas'* condition of being averse to Kṛṣṇa is without beginning (*anādi*). Kṛṣṇa is supremely compassionate, and He is not to be accused of putting the *jīvas* into an undesirable condition, because, being exceedingly sportive, He has given the *jīvas* a divine jewel in the form of independence, and He never interferes with it. The cause of the *jīvas'* undesirable condition is their own misbehaviour in regard to misuse of their God-given independence.

In *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Madhya-līlā* 20.108–109) Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī has stated:

jīvera 'svarūpa' haya—kṛṣṇera 'nitya-dāsa'
kṛṣṇera 'taṭasthā-śakti', 'bhedābheda-prakāśa'

sūryāṁśu-kiraṇa, yena agni-jvālā-caya
svābhāvika kṛṣṇera tina-prakāra 'śakti' haya

Kṛṣṇa's natural potency is of three types. The *jīva* is a manifestation of Kṛṣṇa's *taṭasthā-śakti*. The *jīva* is related with Kṛṣṇa as a manifestation simultaneously different and non-different from Him. If Kṛṣṇa is compared to the sun then the *jīva* is like an *aṁśa*, an atomic particle emanating from Him. Or the *jīva* is like a spark emanating from fire (Kṛṣṇa).

In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.2.37) it has also been stated:

bhayaṁ dvitīyābhiniveśataḥ syā-
dīśād apetasya viparyayo 'smṛtiḥ
tan-māyayāto budha ābhajet taṁ
bhaktyaikayeśaṁ guru-devatātmā

The *jīva* who is averse to Bhagavān forgets his own constitutional nature because of being controlled by *māyā*. Due to this forgetfulness, he becomes absorbed in the material body and all things related to it, and a sort of mistaken and inverted identification arises in which he develops the conception that he is the material body: 'I am a demigod', or 'I am a human being'. In this state of bodily identification, there are many things to be feared, such as old age, disease and death. Therefore, people who know the truth should see their *guru* as *īśvara*, their master, non-different from and very dear to Bhagavān. They should then perform single-pointed *bhajana* of their *guru* as *īśvara* by exclusive and one-pointed, unalloyed devotional service.

The monists say, "*Jīvātmā* and Paramātmā are non-different. In the conditioned state, when *brahma* is covered by ignorance, it is called *jīva*. *Jīva* and the world have no factual existence: '*brahma satyaṁ jagan mithyā jīvo brahmaiva nāparaḥ – brahma* is the truth, this world is false, and the individual soul is non-different from *brahma*.'" However, this conclusion of the *advaita-vādīs* is completely imaginary, opposed to *śāstra*

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and false in all respects, because in the Śrutis, *para-brahma* has been described as complete, flawless, undivided and composed of eternity, knowledge and bliss, whereas the *jīva* has been described as the minute, conscious and expanded part of *para-brahma*, the omnipotent Supreme Lord. *Para-brahma* is one, but the *jīvas* are innumerable.

bālāgra-śata-bhāgasya śatadhā kalpitasya ca
bhāgo jīvaḥ sa vijñeyaḥ sa cānantyāya kalpate

Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad (5.9)

Though the *jīva* is situated in an inert material body, he is a subtle transcendental principle (*tattva*). If one divides the tip of a hair into one hundred parts and again divides one of those parts into one hundred parts, then however subtle one of those parts may be, the *jīva* is even more subtle than that. Although he is so subtle, the *jīva* is a spiritual substance and he is suitable for *ānantya dharma*. (*Ant* means 'to be free from death', and *ānantya* means 'liberation', or *mokṣa*.)

Gaupavan śruti-vākya, quoted in the *Aṇu-bhāṣya* on *Vedānta-sūtra* (2.3.18), states: "*aṇurhyeṣa ātmāyaṁ vā ete sinītaḥ puṇyaṁ cāpuṇyañca* – the *ātmā* is minute in size. Sin, piety and so on can take shelter of him." *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (3.1.9) confirms this: "*eṣo 'ṇurātmā cetasā veditavyo* – this *ātmā* is minute in size."

In *Bhagavad-gītā* (7.5) Śrī Kṛṣṇa declares:

apareyam itas tv anyāṁ
prakṛtiṁ viddhi me parām
jīva-bhūtāṁ mahā-bāho
yayedaṁ dhāryate jagat

O mighty-armed Arjuna, the *māyā-śakti*, which I described in the previous verse, is my *aparā*, or inferior, potency. In addition to this potency, there is another potency of Mine, the *parā*, or superior, potency, in the form of the *jīvas*. You should know that by My *jīva-śakti*, this entire creation is being maintained.

The constitution of the *jīva* is purely spiritual, and in his constitutional state he is designated by the word *aham* (I) [I am the eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa and an eternal individual]. The *jīvas* have manifested from the *taṭasthā-śakti*, which has come forth from the inconceivable potency of Paramātmā, and therefore their *dharma* is also *taṭasthā*, always. At the same time, because of being minute, the *jīva* is naturally susceptible to being controlled by *māyā*. Therefore he is neither completely different nor completely non-different from Paramātmā. The *jīva* can be controlled by *māyā*, whereas Īśvara is the master of *māyā*. It is clear from the scriptural statements accepted by the disciplic succession that the *jīva* is an eternal principle distinct from Īśvara. Therefore, the *jīva's* simultaneous difference and non-difference from Īśvara are both established by Śruti. *Kevalādvaita-vāda* is completely non-Vedic.

The *jīva* is *aṇu-caitanya*, atomic consciousness, and is endowed with the quality of knowledge. Described by the word 'I' – he is an enjoyer[3], a thinker and one who comprehends. The *jīva* has an eternal *svarūpa* which is extremely subtle. Just as the different parts of the gross body – hands, legs, nose, eyes, etc. – combine to manifest a beautiful form when established in their respective places, similarly, a very beautiful atomic spiritual body is manifest,

3 Editor: In contrast to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is the one and only independent enjoyer, the pure *jīva* is a dependent enjoyer who, as such, relishes pleasure-filled, loving exchanges with the Supreme Enjoyer.

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which is composed of different parts. This transcendental body, or *svarūpa*, is the *jīva's* eternal constitutional form.

When the *jīva* is conditioned by *māyā*, its eternal body is covered by gross (*sthūla-śarīra*) and subtle material bodies (*liṅga-śarīra*). It is not *māyāvāda* to say that the *jīva* is controlled by *māyā*. According to the *māyāvādīs*, the *jīva* is a temporary principle of *brahma* covered by *māyā* or a reflection of *māyā*. However, when we say that the *jīva* is 'controlled by *māyā*', it is clear that the conscious particle, the *jīva*, is prone to be defeated by *māyā* because of his minute nature. *Māyā* is the *aparā-śakti*, or inferior potency, and the *jīva* is *parā-śakti*, or superior potency. The false identification with inert matter is the function of *māyā*. The *jīva* is a transcendental substance beyond this *māyā*. Even when the *jīva* is free from *māyā*, his quality of being an individual living entity is not destroyed.

Māyāvāda is an erroneous theory. According to this philosophy, *brahma* is non-dual, pure, undivided and uncontaminated. If, for the sake of argument, we accept this *siddhānta*, then what is it that becomes covered or reflected? How is it possible for *brahma* to be reflected or covered? Who is the seer of this? What is the place of reflection? When is there any other substance apart from *brahma*? When we examine *māyāvāda* in this way, we see that it is ridiculous to the fullest extent. The evidence of the *śruti-mantras* becomes useless when philosophers stretch their meaning to concoct an interpretation in support of their own sectarian doctrine.

The consistent opinion of the Vedas is that the inherent principle of simultaneous and inconceivable difference and non-difference between Bhagavān and His potencies is true, eternal and meaningful. The *jīva*, being in a separate category from Īśvara, is *vibhinnāṁśa-tattva*, and he is manifest from Kṛṣṇa's *taṭasthā-śakti*. The *jīva* is a pure substance and by nature engaged in his constitutional activities in relation with Kṛṣṇa. This is the factual understanding of the living entities' intrinsic characteristics.

Deliberation on the jīva who is under the influence of māyā in the conditioned stage on account of his marginal nature

The *jīva* is constitutionally the eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa, but when he misuses his own natural independence because of his marginal nature (*taṭasthā-dharma*), he becomes averse to Kṛṣṇa. At that time his pure constitutional form becomes covered by the gross and subtle bodies given by *māyā*, and he identifies himself with these material coverings. Then he tastes happiness and distress in the cycle of material existence, taking birth in various species of life, sometimes on the heavenly planets and sometimes in the hellish regions. He is burnt continually by the threefold miseries: *ādhyātmika*, miseries arising from the body and mind; *ādhidaivika*, those arising from other living beings; and *ādhibhautika*, those arising from the natural environment. In this way, he goes on wandering throughout the material world. If by good fortune he attains the company of a pure Vaiṣṇava, who has full realized knowledge of *tattva*, then by his instructions the *jīva's* ignorance is dispelled. Attaining *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*, he becomes qualified to render service to Kṛṣṇa.

'nitya-baddha'—kṛṣṇa haite nitya-bahirmukha
'nitya-saṁsāra', bhuñje narakādi duḥkha

sei doṣe māyā-piśācī daṇḍa kare tāre
ādhyātmikādi tāpa-traya tāre jāri' māre

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kāma-krodhera dāsa haṅā tāra lāthi khāya
bhramite bhramite yadi sādhu-vaidya pāya

tāṅra upadeśa-mantre piśācī palāya
kṛṣṇa-bhakti pāya, tabe kṛṣṇa-nikaṭe jāya

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta
(*Madhya-līlā* 22.12–15)

The living entity is constitutionally the eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa, but when he misuses his natural independence because of his marginal nature, he becomes averse to Kṛṣṇa, and tastes heavenly happiness and hellish distress within this material existence. Because of the *jīva's* fault of being averse to Kṛṣṇa, the witch *māyā* binds him in the covering of the gross and subtle bodies and inflicts punishment upon him by burning him with the threefold miseries – *ādhyātmika*, *ādhidaivika* and *ādhibhautika*. Controlled by the six enemies headed by lust and anger, the *jīva* is continually beaten by the witch *māyā*; this is the *jīva's* disease. As he goes on wandering from high to low in material existence, he may by good fortune find a doctor in the form of a *sādhu*. Then, by the influence of the *sādhu's* instructions, Māyā-devī abandons the *jīva* and runs away. This is just like a witch giving up her influence over a man and fleeing from the *mantras* of an exorcist. Only a *jīva* who is free from *māyā* attains *kṛṣṇa-bhakti* and is qualified to approach Kṛṣṇa.

The *jīva* bound by *māyā* is controlled by the *saṁskāras* (mental impressions) formed by his own fruitive actions, by the modes of nature (*guṇas*) and by self-identification with the body expressed through conceptions such as 'I' and 'mine'. Thus he accepts birth in various species of life. While continuously wandering in this way, he may get association of saints, and by that influence develop transcendental faith (*śraddhā*). When he comes to know Śrī Kṛṣṇa through his inclination to render service, he attains release forever from all the bindings of *māyā*.

In Goloka Vṛndāvana, Śrī Baladeva Prabhu manifests unlimited *jīvas* who serve Vṛndāvana-bihārī Śrī Kṛṣṇa as eternal associates (*nitya-pārṣadas*). In Paravyoma Vaikuṇṭha, Mahā-Saṅkarṣaṇa manifests unlimited *nitya-pārṣada jīvas* to serve the original Lord of Vaikuṇṭha, Nārāyaṇa. Eternally situated in their own constitutional forms, they always remain attentive to the service of their worshipful deity. They are always inclined towards the object of their worship and they are always strong, having attained the strength of the spiritual potency, the *cit-śakti*. They have no relationship with inert matter, and do not even know that there is a *śakti* called *māyā*. *Prema* alone is their life. They are unaware of even the slightest semblance of birth, death, fear and lamentation.

Kāraṇābdhiśāyī Mahā-Viṣṇu is situated in the Virajā, which lies between the spiritual realm and the material world. By His glance towards *māyā*, the minute conscious *jīvas* are manifest in the form of atoms situated within the rays of His glance. Because they are in close proximity to *māyā*, these *jīvas* notice *māyā's* wonderful nature. All the characteristics of the ordinary *jīvas*, which were previously mentioned, are found in them. Because of their being extremely minute by nature, and because of their marginal disposition, they sometimes look towards the spiritual sky and sometimes towards the material realm. The *jīvas* are extremely weak in the marginal condition, because at that time they have not yet attained spiritual strength, by the mercy of the object of

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"The *jīvas* are extremely weak in the marginal condition, because at that time they have not yet attained spiritual strength, by the mercy of the object of their service and worship (*sevya-vastu*)."

their service and worship (*sevya-vastu*). Among these unlimited *jīvas*, those who are infatuated by sense gratification and want to enjoy *māyā* become bound by her. Conversely, those *jīvas* who ponder over their object of worship attain the strength of *cit-śakti* by the mercy of the *sevya-vastu*, and go to the transcendental abode.

Māyā is Kṛṣṇa's potency by which He creates the mundane universe. He then engages the *māyā-śakti* in purifying the *jīvas* who are averse to *bhakti*. *Māyā* has two functions: *avidyā* and *pradhāna*. The function of *avidyā* is related to the *jīva* and the function of *pradhāna* is related to inanimate matter. The *jīva's* desire to perform reward-producing activities is born from *avidyā*, and the whole inert universe has arisen from *pradhāna*. *Vidyā* and *avidyā* are two further dimensions of *māyā*, which are both related to the *jīva*. The bondage of the *jīva* comes from the function of *avidyā*, and his liberation comes from the function of *vidyā*. When an offensive living entity becomes inclined towards Kṛṣṇa, the actions of the *vidyā* function begin in his heart. However, when he becomes averse, the action of the *avidyā* function takes over.

The jīva is free from māyā in the liberated state

The intrinsic constitutional nature of the *jīva* to be the servant of Kṛṣṇa is not destroyed even though he has remained bound since time without beginning in the fetters of desire for material enjoyment. Somehow his true nature continues to exist and when it finds just a small opportunity, it becomes manifest again and begins to reveal its own identity. This opportunity is nothing but the association of saintly devotees, *sādhu-saṅga*.

yasya deve parā bhaktir
yathā deve tathā gurau
tasyaite kathitā hyarthāḥ
prakāśante mahātmanaḥ

Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad (6.23)

The actual purport of the Vedas is revealed within the hearts of those great souls who have *parā-bhakti* for Śrī Kṛṣṇa. In other words, it is revealed to those who have become eligible for *śuddha-bhakti* through the awakening of faith in Kṛṣṇa, and who also have the same unflinching faith in *guru* and *sādhus*.

It has also been stated in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Madhya-līlā* 22.43, 45, 54, 33):

saṁsāra brahmite kona bhāgye keha tare
nadīra pravāhe yena kāṣṭha lāge tīre

kona bhāgye kāro saṁsāra kṣayonmukha haya
sādhu-saṅge tare, kṛṣṇe rati upajaya

'sādhu-saṅga' 'sādhu-saṅga'—sarva-śāstre kaya
lava-mātra sādhu-saṅge sarva-siddhi haya

'kṛṣṇa, tomāra haṅa' yadi bale eka-bāra
māyā-bandha haite kṛṣṇa tāre kare pāra

The meaning is, when the *jīva* becomes averse to Kṛṣṇa, he is swept away in the current of birth and death in material existence. He wanders aimlessly throughout 8,400,000 species of life, being burnt by the threefold miseries. It is extremely difficult

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to attain deliverance from this current. However, just as a piece of wood flowing in the forceful current of a river may by good fortune be washed up on the bank, similarly, a *jīva* may by extremely good fortune attain the shelter of *sādhu-saṅga* and thus gain release from the current of material existence and again become established in his own constitutional position as the servant of Kṛṣṇa.

When, by good fortune, someone is about to be released from material existence, he attains *sādhu-saṅga*. Due to this association, his loving attachment to the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa awakens. That is why all the *śāstras* profusely glorify *sādhu-saṅga,* and at the same time they point out that even brief association with a *sādhu* is not easily attained. If any *jīva*, feeling extreme anguish, prays to Kṛṣṇa from the core of his heart and even once calls out, "O Kṛṣṇa, I am Yours!" then Kṛṣṇa sends him *sādhu-saṅga* and transports him beyond the bondage of *māyā*.

When, by great good fortune, someone's material existence is about to come to an end, he associates with *sādhus*. What is this good fortune? We should understand this very well. The *jīva's* fortune is only the fruit of his previous activities (*karma*). There are two types of *karma*: for material gain (*ārthika*) and for spiritual gain (*paramārthika*). Material good fortune arises from *ārthika-karma,* and spiritual fortune arises from *paramārthika-karma*. Activities such as serving *sādhus*, Bhagavān and His name, which are performed for the sake of acquiring spiritual wealth, are collectively *paramārthika*. No matter what a *jīva* may do, if he performs *paramārthika* activities, these collective activities create within his heart a type of impression, or *saṁskāra*, in the form of the desire for *bhakti*. When this impression becomes well nourished, it is called good fortune, or *saubhāgya*, and by the influence of this good fortune the *jīvas'* materialistic desires gradually begin to weaken. When desires pertaining to material existence are very much diminished and the *saṁskāra* of good fortune has been nourished to a great extent, then *śraddhā*, or faith, in *sādhu-saṅga* arises. This same *śraddhā* easily causes *sādhu-saṅga* to occur repeatedly, and that is the cause of attaining complete perfection.

The philosophical conclusion (*siddhānta*) is that good fortune is the fruit of *sukṛti* accumulated birth after birth, and on the awakening of this good fortune one develops attraction for *sādhu-saṅga*. Then again, this faith, or *śraddhā*, gradually develops into devotional practice (*bhajana-kriyā*), the eradication of obstacles to devotion (*anartha-nivṛtti*), steadfast faith (*niṣṭhā*), transcendental relish (*ruci*), attachment to Kṛṣṇa (*āsakti*), and then *kṛṣṇa-rati*, transcendental ecstasy, appears. A life in which good fortune has arisen is characterized by this faith. Therefore it is said that *śraddhā* and *sādhu-saṅga* are the foundation of all auspiciousness. This is confirmed in the *Bṛhan-nāradīya Purāṇa* (4.33):

bhaktis tu bhagavad-bhakta-
saṅgena parijāyate
sat-saṅgaḥ prāpyate pumbhiḥ
sukṛtaiḥ pūrva-saṁcitaiḥ

Bhakti is awakened by the association of the pure devotees of Śrī Bhagavān. Such *sādhu-saṅga* is attained by the accumulation of *sukṛti* in previous lives.

It has also been said in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.51.53):

bhavāpavargo bhramato yadā bhave-
jjanasya tarhyacyuta sat-samāgamaḥ
sat-saṅgamo yarhi tadaiva sad-gatau
parāvareśe tvayi jāyate matiḥ

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O infallible one, the *jīvas* are wandering in the cycle of repeated birth and death since time immemorial. When the time for their release from that cycle is approaching, they attain the association of *sādhus*. The very moment the *jīva* acquires *sat-saṅga*, his intelligence becomes firmly attached to You, the supreme shelter and controller of all causes and activities.

satāṁ prasaṅgān mama vīrya-saṁvido
bhavanti hṛt-karṇa-rasāyanāḥ kathāḥ
taj-joṣaṇād āśv apavarga-vartmani
śraddhā ratir bhaktir anukramiṣyati

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (3.25.25)

In the association of saintly persons, discussions of My valiant deeds become a rejuvenating nectar to the heart and ears. By such cultivation one quickly becomes liberated from ignorance. He then progressively attains *śraddhā* (*sādhana-bhakti*), then *rati* (*bhāva-bhakti*) and finally the awakening of *prema-bhakti*.

When one is freed from material existence, it is essential to continue cultivating *bhakti* to attain Bhagavān. It has been said in *śāstras* such as the Upaniṣads that it is only unalloyed *bhagavad-bhakti* that carries the *jīvas* close to Bhagavān and arranges an audience with Him and eternal *sevā* to Him. Bhagavān is only controlled by *bhakti*. This is substantiated by verses such as *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.14.21, *bhaktyāham ekayā grāhyaḥ*, and *Māṭhara-śruti* (quoted in *Aṇu-bhāṣya* on *Vedānta-sūtra* 3.3.53), *bhaktir evainaṁ nayati bhaktir evainaṁ darśayati / bhakti-vaśaḥ puruṣo bhaktir eva bhūyasī*.

This *bhakti* is not attainable without *sat-saṅga*. When one cultivates *bhakti* in the association of devotees, first *sādhana-bhakti* is awakened, then *bhāva-bhakti* and in the end *prema-bhakti*. At this point, the *jīva's* life becomes successful. After being completely released from *māyā*, he attains the fifth objective of human life (*pañcama-puruṣārtha*), in the form of *kṛṣṇa-prema*.

There are two types of *jīvas* who are liberated from *māyā*. Eternally liberated *jīvas* (*nitya-mukta*) are those who have never been in the bondage of *māyā*. *Baddha-mukta jīvas* are those who were first bound in *māyā* and who then became liberated by engaging in devotional practices. There are also two types of *nitya-mukta jīvas*: *aiśvarya-gata* and *mādhurya-gata*. The *aiśvarya-gata nitya-mukta jīvas*, such as Garuḍa, are the associates of Nārāyaṇa, the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha, and they are the particles of the effulgent rays emanating from Mūla-Saṅkarṣaṇa situated in Paravyoma. *Mādhurya-gata nitya-mukta jīvas* are the associates of Goloka Vṛndāvana-nātha Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and they are manifest from Baladeva in Goloka Vṛndāvana.

There are three types of *baddha-mukta jīvas*, namely *brahmajyotir-gata, aiśvarya-gata* and *mādhurya-gata*. Those *jīvas* who perform *sādhana* with the objective of attaining the oneness of *jīva* and *brahma* attain liberation and complete destruction in *brahma-sāyujya*, entering into the *brahma-jyoti*. Those whose *sādhana* is based on fondness for opulence attain *sālokya*, residence on the same planet as the Lord, with the associates of Vaikuṇṭha. And those whose *sādhana* is imbued with an inclination towards sweetness, after being released from *māyā*, taste the happiness derived from *prema-sevā* in *dhāmas* such as the eternal Vṛndāvana.

It is necessary to know one special *siddhānta*: *mādhurya-rasa* has two aspects, namely, *mādhurya*, sweetness, and *audārya*,

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magnanimity. Where *mādhurya* predominates, the form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is manifest. Where *audārya* predominates, the form of Śrī Gaurāṅga reigns, radiant with the sentiments and bodily lustre of Śrīmatī Rādhikā. In the original Vṛndāvana there are two compartments: *kṛṣṇa-pīṭha* and *gaura-pīṭha*. In *kṛṣṇa-pīṭha*, Kṛṣṇa's attendants are *nitya-siddha* and *nitya-mukta pārṣadas* who have attained *audārya-bhāva* predominated by *mādhurya*. This is the same quality possessed by Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself. In *gaura-pīṭha* the *nitya-siddha* and *nitya-mukta parikaras* experience *mādhurya* predominated by *audārya*.

Some associates are, by the disposition of their *svarūpa*, present in both places simultaneously. Others are present in one *svarūpa* in one realm only, and not in the other. At the time of perfection, those whose *sādhana* is devoted to Gaura exclusively, render service only in *gaura-pīṭha*. Those who worship Kṛṣṇa exclusively render service only in *kṛṣṇa-pīṭha* at the time of perfection. And those who worship both *svarūpas*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Gaura, accept two bodies and are present in both realms simultaneously. This is the supreme mystery of the *acintya-bhedābheda*, inconceivable difference and non-difference, of Gaura and Kṛṣṇa.

The principle of inconceivable difference and non-difference

Acintya-bhedābheda-tattva is the philosophical principle regarding the inconceivable (*acintya*) relationship of simultaneous difference (*bheda*) and non-difference (*abheda*) existing between the inconceivable and unlimitedly powerful *para-tattva*, and His various potencies, as well as that which manifests from those potencies. This principle has been called *acintya*, inconceivable, because it is accessible only by transcendental sound vibration. It is inaccessible to logic, arguments and the *jīva's* minute thinking capacity. It can be understood, however, if we accept scriptural statements endorsed by the *guru-paramparā*. The human intellect and power of comprehension cannot conceive of the condition of being simultaneously and equally different and non-different. Nevertheless, we certainly have to accept this principle as factual and eternal because the *śāstras* have described it in that way. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu expounded *acintya-bhedābheda-tattva* to Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya in Śrī Purī-dhāma, and in Kāśī to both Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī and the *kevalādvaita-vādī* Śrī Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī.

Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī has also established this *acintya-bhedābheda-tattva* in his *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* (2.2.186) and in *Vaiṣṇava-toṣanī*, and so have Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī in *Laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta*, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī in the Ṣaṭ-sandarbhas and Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa in *Govinda-bhāṣya* and *Bhāṣya-pīṭhaka*. Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī has specifically established *acintya-bhedābheda-tattva* in his treatise *Sarva-saṁvādinī*, on the foundation of evidence from *Vedānta-sūtra*, the Upaniṣads and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. On the basis of the verse *vadanti tat tattva-vidaḥ* in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.2.11), he has proved that the *advaya-jñāna para-tattva* is devoid of the three types of differences: *svagat-bheda*, differences within itself; *sajātīya-bheda*, differences from others in the same category; and *vijātīya-bheda*, differences from others in different categories. In this regard he has written [in *Bhagavat-sandarbha* 14]: *"ekam eva taṁ paramaṁ tattvaṁ svābhāvikācintya-śaktyā sarvadaiva svarūpa-tad-rūpa-vaibhava-jīva-pradhāna-rūpeṇa caturdhāvatiṣṭhate, sūryāntara-maṇḍala-stha-teja iva, maṇḍala-*

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tad-bahirgata-raśmi-tat-praticchavi-raśmyādi-rūpeṇa – The Supreme Truth (*parama-tattva*) is one. He is adorned with His natural, inconceivable energy by which He eternally exists in full splendour in four aspects: (1) *svarūpa*, (2) *tad-rūpa-vaibhava*, (3) *jīva* and (4) *pradhāna*. To some degree we can use the following four examples to illustrate these four aspects of *para-tattva*: the effulgence situated in the interior of the sun planet, the sun globe itself, the rays emanating from the sun and its remote reflected image."

The *svarūpa* of *para-tattva* is indeed His transcendental form, His *sac-cid-ānanda vigraha*. His *tad-rūpa-vaibhava* is His transcendental abode, name, associates and collective paraphernalia used in His pastimes. There are innumerable *jīvas* who are classified as either eternally liberated (*nitya-mukta*) or eternally conditioned (*nitya-baddha*). The word *pradhāna* refers to the unmanifest material nature and the whole gross and subtle inert creation arising from it. Now that the oneness of the eternal Supreme Truth in four manifestations has been established, a question can be raised. How can the Supreme Truth accommodate activities that are eternally opposed to each of His four aspects? The answer is that the intelligence of the *jīva* is distinctly limited; thus it is impossible for him to understand *bhagavat-tattva* – except by the mercy of the *acintya-śakti* of the Supreme Lord.

Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī has not classified *jīva* and *prakṛti* as *tattva*. Rather, by establishing them as *śakti*, he has confirmed the non-duality of the *para-tattva*. He has accepted the *para-tattva* endowed with potency as *para-brahma*. If one considers *para-tattva* to be devoid of potency or attributes, the omnipotence and the completeness of *para-tattva*, who is complete in six opulences, is lost. *Brahma* is the Supreme Truth in whom lies the integral potency to be great and also to make others great. Since the *sac-cid-ānanda para-tattva* is one without a second, His *śakti* is also (a) *aghaṭana-ghaṭana-paṭīyasī*, capable of making the impossible possible, (b) composed of *sac-cid-ānanda* and (c) one without a second. This one *parā-śakti* is manifest in three forms – *saṁvit*, *sandhinī* and *hlādinī*. On account of the activities of this *śakti*, *brahma* is eternally established as *saviśeṣa*, possessed of form and attributes. The *śakti* of *brahma* exists in two ways. When the potencies of Bhagavān are situated within the *vigraha* of Śrī Bhagavān and are one with it, then they are manifest as potency alone without shape. When they are manifest in the form of the presiding deity of the *śakti*, they appear as the associates of Bhagavān and render all of their varieties of service; then they are called personified *śakti*.

In Gauḍīya philosophy, *śakti* and *śaktimān* together are accepted as the one undivided, non-dual truth. Only in Gauḍīya philosophy is the word *acintya* used to define the truth, or the divinity, of His *śakti*, which is beyond our material sense perception. We do not see this mentioned anywhere else. Ācārya Śaṅkara has referred to *para-brahma* as *acintya* in his explanation of *Viṣṇu-sahasra-nāma*, and Śrīdhara Svāmī has also used the word *acintya* in his commentary on *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*. However, there is some speciality in Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī's consideration of the word *acintya*. Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī has pointed out that the word *acintya* means *śabda-mūlaka śrutārthāpatti jñāna-gocara*, or that which can be known through the statements of the scriptures received in *guru-paramparā*. We have already explained this.

It is impossible for *śakti* and *śaktimān* to be either absolutely different or absolutely non-

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different from each other. In the Vedas we find *śruti-mantras* indicating difference and others indicating non-difference; both types of *mantra* are evident. It is the inconceivable potency (*acintya-śakti*) of the one *para-tattva* which reconciles this simultaneous difference and non-difference. This is also impossible to fathom by human intelligence; it is understood only by taking shelter of the evidence of *śāstra* as it is received in *paramparā*. Therefore, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī has accepted this *acintya-bhedābheda-tattva*.

Others, such as Bhāskarācārya, the followers of the Purāṇas and the devotees of Lord Śiva, have also accepted *bhedābheda* (difference and non-difference), but their *bhedābheda* is based on logic and is therefore refutable and inconsistent. There is also some *bheda* (disparity) practically and theoretically in the monistic theory (*kevalādvaita-vāda*) of the *māyāvādīs*. However, the testing stone of scriptural evidence shows that it is false to accept the non-existence of *māyā* on the pretext of the indescribable real-and-unreal *advaita-vāda* logic. Therefore, *kevalādvaita-vāda* is imaginary and contrary to *śāstra*. The theory of eternal difference (*bheda-vāda*) is also accepted in the doctrines of Gautama, Kanāda, Jaiminī, Kapila and Pātañjalī, but it is not in agreement with Vedānta.

Natural *bhedābheda* or *dvaitādvaita* is accepted even in the doctrine of Nimbāditya Ācārya, but it is also incomplete. Śrī Rāmānuja's *viśiṣṭādvaita-vāda* accepts the difference between *śakti* and *śaktimān*, so Śrī Rāmānuja can be called another type of dualist (*dvaita-vādī*). In the purely dualistic philosophy (*dvaita-vāda*) of Madhvācārya, because of the acceptance of extreme *bheda*, there is an eternal difference between the dependent *tattvas* and the independent *tattva*, Īśvara. In this philosophy, five types of differences are eternal, real and beginningless: the difference between (1) *jīva* and Īśvara, (2) *jīva* and *jīva*, (3) Īśvara and *jaḍa* (inert matter), (4) *jīva* and *jaḍa* and (5) *jaḍa* and *jaḍa*. In addition to this, Madhvācārya accepts the eternal *sac-cid-ānanda vigraha* of Nartaka Gopāla. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu accepted the Madhva *sampradāya* because of their strong belief in the eternal spiritual form of the Lord, and this is the fundamental foundation stone of this *acintya-bhedābheda*.

There are some technical differences between the philosophical opinions expounded by previous Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* because of some incompleteness in them. The *sampradāyas* are different simply because of these technical philosophical specialities. By the power of His omniscience, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who is directly the *para-tattva*, has compensated for the deficiencies in all these doctrines and thus completed them. He has bestowed His mercy on the world by giving the thoroughly pure, scientific and realized conception of *acintya-bhedābheda*, correcting and completing Śrī Madhva's ideology of *sac-cid-ānanda vigraha*, Śrī Rāmānuja Ācārya's *śakti-siddhānta*, Śrī Viṣṇusvāmī's *śuddhādvaita-siddhānta* and *tadīya sarvasvatra*, and the *dvaitādvaita-siddhānta* of Nimbāditya Ācārya.

When we assess the statements from all limbs of the Vedas, we find that one eternal truth is to be known. This eternal truth is that the world is real; it is not a false substance imagined out of ignorance. It has arisen from the unimpeded will of the Supreme Lord. It is not manufactured by the *jīva*. To attribute reality to something false is called *vivarta*, illusion. Although the world is perishable, it is real. It has arisen from the glance, that is, simply by the will, of Īśvara, the possessor of inconceivable potency. There is no

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place for *vivarta* in this. Parameśvara's *māyā* called *aparā-śakti*, the inferior potency, has created the inert material world full of moving and non-moving entities in accordance with His will. The principle of *acintya-bhedābheda* is applicable to the whole universe. Although the universe is real, its existence is not eternal. This very fact is proved by the *śruti-mantra, nityo nityānām* (*Kaṭha Upaniṣad* 2.2.13, *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 6.13).

Exclusive *bheda*, exclusive *abheda-vāda*, *śuddhādvaita* and *viśiṣṭādvaita-vāda* are all localized, or contextual, perspectives found in some areas of the *śruti-śāstra*, which are simultaneously opposed to the perspectives found in other areas. But the doctrine of *acintya-bhedābheda* is the most perfect and complete conclusion of all limbs of the Vedas. This very doctrine is the abode of the natural condition of the *jīva* and it is also consonant with the reasoning of *śāstra*. The *jīva's* eternal relationship is not with this inert world. The creation is not a transformation of *vastu*, the *para-brahma* Himself; it is a transformation of the *śakti* of *para-brahma*. This gross and subtle universe is merely for the *jīva's* endeavour to enjoy sense gratification.

Deliberation on śuddha-bhakti

We have already mentioned that according to the scriptures, *bhakti* is the only means of attaining Bhagavān. Only *bhakti* can cause the *jīvas* to have the vision of Bhagavān and bring them into His presence. Only *bhakti* can control Bhagavān, the Supreme Person. We shall now deliberate upon the intrinsic nature of *bhakti*.

In determining the definition of *bhakti*, Maharṣi Śāṇḍilya has stated: "*sā parānuraktir īśvare* – transcendental attachment to Īśvara is devotional service" (*Śāṇḍilya-sūtra* 1.2). *Śrī Nārada-pañcarātra* (quoted in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.1.12) states: "*sarvopādhi-vinirmuktaṁ tat-paratvena nirmalam / hṛṣīkeṇa hṛṣīkeśa-sevanaṁ bhaktir ucyate* – *Bhakti* is service rendered by the transcendental senses to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of the transcendental senses. Such *bhakti*, in which all endeavours are undertaken for the pleasure of Kṛṣṇa, is free from obstructions arising from the nature of the body and mind. It is also pure; it is not covered by the creepers of *karma*, reward-seeking activity, or *jñāna*, knowledge in pursuit of impersonal liberation."

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (3.29.11–12) defines *bhakti* thus:

> *mad-guṇa-śruti-mātreṇa*
> *mayi sarva-guhāśaye*
> *mano-gatir avicchinnā*
> *yathā gaṅgāmbhaso 'mbudhau*
>
> *lakṣaṇaṁ bhakti-yogasya*
> *nirguṇasya hyudāhṛtam*
> *ahaituky avyavahitā*
> *yā bhaktiḥ puruṣottame*
>
> I am the Supreme Enjoyer, the Lord who dwells within the hearts of all. When there is unmotivated and unimpeded natural affection for Me, and when simply upon hearing My qualities, the mind flows towards Me, like an unbroken stream of oil, just as the Gaṅgā flows without interruption towards the ocean. It is called *nirguṇa bhakti-yoga*, transcendental devotional service.

Although such definitions of *bhakti* have been given in the scriptures, Svayam Bhagavān Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's dear associate Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has combined all previous

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definitions of *bhakti*, and has given in his *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.1.11) a beautiful, new definition, which is the life and treasured aspiration of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas:

anyābhilāṣitā-śūnyaṁ
jñāna-karmādy-anāvṛtam
ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānuśīlanaṁ
bhaktir uttamā

Uttama-bhakti, pure devotional service, is the cultivation of activities that are meant exclusively for the pleasure of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. It is the uninterrupted flow of service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, performed through all endeavours of body, mind and speech, as well as through expression of various spiritual sentiments (*bhāvas*). It is not covered by *jñāna* (speculative knowledge aimed at impersonal liberation), *karma* (reward-seeking activity), *yoga* or austerities; and it is completely free from all desires other than for Śrī Kṛṣṇa's happiness.

In this verse, both the intrinsic (*svarūpa*) and marginal (*taṭasthā*) characteristics of *bhakti* have been lucidly presented. The purport of the words *uttama-bhakti* is pure *bhakti*. *Karma-miśra-bhakti* and *jñāna-miśra-bhakti* are not pure. The goal of *karma-miśra-bhakti* is material enjoyment, and the goal of *jñāna-miśra-bhakti* is liberation. Only *bhakti* that is devoid of the desires for material enjoyment and liberation is called *uttama-bhakti* – this is the means to attain *prema* for Bhagavān.

What is this *bhakti*? We shall describe its intrinsic characteristic (*svarūpa-lakṣaṇa*) and its marginal characteristics (*taṭasthā-lakṣaṇa*). Its intrinsic characteristic is the full endeavour, by body, mind and speech, and the cultivation

"Only *bhakti* that is devoid of the desires for material enjoyment and liberation is called *uttama-bhakti* – this is the means to attain *prema* for Bhagavān."

of loving sentiments (*bhāva*) for the pleasure of Kṛṣṇa. Endeavours and *bhāvas* – these two remain ever-active to bring Kṛṣṇa delight. The *svarūpa-lakṣaṇa*, or intrinsic nature, of *bhakti* arises when the special function of Bhagavān's *svarūpa-śakti* (the function of the essence of *hlādinī* and *saṁvit*) appears in the *svarūpa* of the *jīva* by the mercy of Śrī Kṛṣṇa or His devotee.

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has described the two marginal characteristics, or *taṭasthā-lakṣaṇas*, of *bhakti*. The first is that *bhakti* is completely devoid of all desires other than to serve Kṛṣṇa. All types of aspirations other than to advance one's devotion are opposed to *bhakti*, and they are included within *anyabhilāṣitā*. The second marginal characteristic is that it is not covered by *jñāna*, *karma* and so on. Knowledge of the oneness of *jīva* and *brahma*, the *smārta's* daily and occasional performances of prescribed duties for the sake of material self-interest, activities filled with indifference to Bhagavān such as atonement (*prāyāścitta*), knowledge of atheistic *sāṅkhya* philosophy, dry renunciation and so on – these are all opposed to *bhakti*. Only when the cultivation of activities for the pleasure of Kṛṣṇa is free from these two types of unfavourable marginal characteristics is it called *śuddha-bhakti*.

Sādhana-bhakti is the practice of *śuddha-bhakti*, which is performed under the guidance of

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śuddha-bhaktas, after one has received initiation and instructions from a bona fide spiritual master. In *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.1.17, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has described the six special characteristics of *bhakti*:

kleśaghnī śubhadā mokṣa-
laghutākṛt sudurlabhā
sāndrānanda-viśeṣātmā
śrī-kṛṣṇākarṣiṇī ca sā

Śuddha-bhakti has six characteristics: (1) *kleśaghnī* – it destroys all types of distress, (2) *śubhadā* – it bestows complete auspiciousness, (3) *mokṣa-laghutākṛtā* – it makes the attainment of liberation insignificant, (4) *sudurlabhā* – it is extremely rare, (5) *sāndrānanda-viśeṣātmā* – it is the embodiment of condensed bliss, and (6) *śrī-kṛṣṇākarṣiṇī* – it attracts Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

In the very beginning of *sādhana-bhakti*, the first two symptoms, *kleśaghnī* and *śubhadā*, become visible. *Mokṣa-laghutākṛtā* and *sudurlabhā* are then manifest in the stage of *bhāva*, and in the stage of ultimate attainment, or *sādhya* (*prema*), *sāndrānanda-viśeṣātmā* and *śrī-kṛṣṇākarṣiṇī* are observed in addition to the previously mentioned four symptoms.

Sin, the desire to sin, the seed of sin, pious activity, the desire to perform pious activity and the seed of pious activity – the destruction of all these afflictions (*kleśas*) is the first symptom of *bhakti*. The second symptom of *bhakti*, called *śubhadā*, includes the following four qualities: *bhakti* makes one pleasing to all, affectionate towards all living entities and the abode of all good qualities, and it also bestows pure happiness. These first two symptoms are observed at the time of *sādhana-bhakti*.

The third characteristic is that *bhakti* renders even the attainment of liberation insignificant or worthless. The quality of *sudurlabhā*, being extremely rarely attained, is the fourth characteristic of pure *bhakti*. Although one may be detached from sense gratification and may have practised the limbs of *bhakti* for a long time, still one may not attain it. These two characteristics are the symptoms of *bhāva-bhakti*.

The fifth characteristic is that *bhakti* is the embodiment of condensed blissfulness, and the sixth is that it attracts Śrī Kṛṣṇa. These last two features are the symptoms of the ultimate goal of life (*sādhya*), or *prema-bhakti*. The first four symptoms are also observed in the stage of perfection (*sādhya-bhakti*). The first stage of *sādhya-bhakti* is called *bhāva-bhakti* and its highest stage is called *prema*.

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has defined *sādhana-bhakti* thus:

kṛti-sādhyā bhavet sādhya-
bhāvā sā sādhanābhidhā
nitya-siddhasya bhāvasya
prākaṭyaṁ hṛdi sādhyatā

Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.2.2)

Sādhana-bhakti is the engagement of the mind and senses in the limbs of *bhakti* for the purpose of attaining *bhāva-bhakti*. This *bhāva* is a potentiality which eternally exists in the heart of the *jīva* and is manifested in the heart purified by *sādhana*.

This *sādhana-bhakti* is of two types, *vaidhī* and *rāgānuga*. In *vaidhī-bhakti*, *śravaṇa*, *kīrtana* and the limbs of *bhakti* are not undertaken out of a natural affection and inclination; rather they are performed solely out of fear of scriptural rules. The duties the *śāstras* prescribe for the

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jīva are called *vidhi*, and the prohibitions are called *niṣeda*. To comply with these is to follow the discipline of the scriptures. When the *jīva's* engagement in *bhakti* is out of fear of this scriptural discipline it is called *vaidhī-bhakti*:

yatra rāgānavāptatvāt
pravṛttir upajāyate
śāsanenaiva śāstrasya sā
vaidhī-bhaktir ucyate

Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.2.6)

That *bhakti* in which the cause of engagement is not greed (*lobha*), but rather the command of scriptures, is called *vaidhī-bhakti*.

There are many limbs of *sādhana-bhakti*, but in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* sixty-four limbs have been described in particular, beginning with accepting the shelter of a spiritual master (*guru-padāśraya*), accepting initiation and instructions from one's spiritual master (*dīkṣā-śikṣā*), serving one's spiritual master (*guru-sevā*), and so on. Those sixty-four limbs are naturally included within the nine prominent practices mentioned in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (7.5.23). These nine limbs are known as *navadhā-bhakti*:

śravaṇaṁ kīrtanaṁ viṣṇoḥ
smaraṇaṁ pāda-sevanam
arcanaṁ vandanaṁ dāsyaṁ
sakhyam ātma-nivedanam

Some attain perfection even by practising just one limb from among these nine. Some also practise many at once. In fact, the chief result of all the practices of *sādhana-bhakti* is one – *rati* for the transcendental Reality.

The second type of *sādhana-bhakti* is *rāgānuga-bhakti*. This is the method of *bhakti* performed by *sādhakas* who practise the limbs of *bhakti* such as *śravaṇa* and *kīrtana* out of greed to attain the service of their worshipful deity, Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa. *Rāga* is the quality of natural, excessive absorption in the object of one's devotion and attachment to it. *Kṛṣṇa-bhakti* endowed with such *rāga* is called *rāgātmika-bhakti*, and that *bhakti* which follows in the wake of such *rāgātmika-bhakti* is called *rāgānuga-bhakti*.

In conclusion, *vaidhī-bhakti* is subordinate to the regulative principles and disciplines of the scriptures, and *rāgānuga-bhakti* follows in the wake of *rāgātmika-bhakti*. Neither of these two are *sādhya-bhakti*; they are both *sādhana-bhakti*. Only *rāgātmika-bhakti*, the devotion of the eternal residents of Vraja, Mathurā and Dvārakā, is *sādhya-bhakti*. When one reads or hears about their devotion, and greed, or *lobha*, arises in the heart to attain it, one becomes an eligible candidate for *rāgānuga-sādhana-bhakti*. Eligibility for *vaidhī-bhakti* comes from faith in the scriptures; eligibility for *rāgānuga-bhakti* is attained by greed for the loving sentiments of the *rāgātmika* devotees.

tat-tad-bhāvādi-mādhurye
śrute dhīryadapekṣate
nātra śāstraṁ na yuktiṅca
tal lobhotpatti-lakṣaṇam

kṛṣṇaṁ smaran janaṁ cāsya
preṣṭhaṁ nija-samīhitam
tat-tat-kathā-rataś cāsau
kuryād vāsaṁ vraje sadā

sevā sādhaka-rūpeṇa
siddha-rupeṇa cātra hi
tad-bhāva-lipsunā kāryā
vraja-lokānusārataḥ

Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu
(1.2.291, 293, 294)

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The cause of *rāgānuga-bhakti* is greed (*lobha*) for the sentiments of the *rāgātmika* devotees. This greed is not aroused by the arguments of the scriptures. Rather, pure greed is the aspiration to become immersed in the moods of the *rāgātmika* devotees, and it arises on hearing about the sweetness of their feelings for Kṛṣṇa. Those who have developed a greed to attain the moods of Kṛṣṇa's intimate associates of their own choice will always reside in Vraja in their *sādhaka* forms, their present bodies, and with their *siddha* forms, their internally conceived, perfected bodies, they will render service following Śrī Kṛṣṇa's most dear Vraja associates and those who are under their guidance. Thus they will hear, chant and remember the narrations of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. This is the method of practice, or *sādhana-praṇālī*, for *rāgānuga-bhakti* in connection with Vraja.

Rāgānuga-bhakti is of two types, namely *kāmānuga* and *sambandhānuga*. *Kāmānuga* is also of two types: *sambhoga-icchāmayī* and *tat-tad-bhāva-icchamayī*. *Sambhoga-icchāmayī-bhakti* means the desire to engage in amorous meeting with Śrī Kṛṣṇa. *Tat-tad-bhāva-icchāmayī-bhakti* is the longing to experience the sweetness of the moods of the Vraja *gopīs*.

At this point we must understand that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has bestowed upon the *jīvas* of this world instructions that awaken the desire to follow *rāgānuga-bhakti*. Only *bhajana* through *rāga-mārga* is approved by Him. If, by extreme good fortune, the *jīvas* attain the association of the dear associates of Śrī Gaura-sundara, then greed for the mood of the residents of Vraja must certainly be evoked. However, the *sādhaka* should take shelter of *vaidhī-bhakti* until such association is available. One will certainly enter *rāga-mārga* by taking shelter of the lotus feet of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

The duty of those very fortunate *sādhakas* who have attained greed for the moods of the residents of Vraja is to practise *rāgānuga-bhakti*. When such greed is evoked, there no longer remains any taste for subjects other than Bhagavān. One is released from sin, pious activity, *karma*, *akarma*, *vikarma*, dry knowledge and renunciation; and *ruci*, or taste, in the practice of *bhakti* arises. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has written in relation to the gradual development of *bhakti*:

ādau śraddhā tataḥ sādhu-
saṅgo 'tha bhajana-kriyā
tato 'nartha-nivṛttiḥ syāt
tato niṣṭhā rucis tataḥ

athāsaktis tato bhāvas
tataḥ premābhyudañcati
sādhakānām ayaṁ premṇaḥ
prādurbhāve bhavet kramaḥ

Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.4.15–16)

This verse describes advancement on *vaidhī-mārga*, in which there is first faith (*śraddhā*), then the association of *sādhus* and then the eradication of unwanted desires (*anarthas*), through engagement in *bhajana*. Immediately after that comes *niṣṭhā*, *ruci*, *āsakti* and *bhāva*. In this process, *bhāva* remains the *sādhya*, the final goal, for a very long time.

With the appearance of transcendental greed, however, unwanted desires (*anarthas*) are vanquished very easily, because of a lack of greed for other subjects; *bhāva* also arises simultaneously along with this greed. In *rāga-mārga*, it is only necessary to drive away

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pretentiousness and duplicity. If these are not driven far away, then the mind will become highly agitated and *anarthas* will grow. In such a condition, debased attachment will be mistaken for pure *rāga*. In the end, the association of sense objects becomes very strong, and that attachment becomes the cause of the *jīva's* downfall.

The *sādhakas* who are under the shelter of the lotus feet of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu take shelter of *rāgānuga-bhakti* through pure spiritual greed. After taking shelter of the lotus feet of a *sad-guru* in *vaidhī-bhakti*, such *sādhakas* serve the deity. Then, associating with Vaiṣṇavas, showing respect to *bhakti* literature, residing in the places of the Lord's pastimes and continually chanting Śrī Bhagavān's names, they render service to Kṛṣṇa within their minds by the path of *bhāva*. They completely follow the moods of the residents of Vraja with their *siddha-deha*. Among them, *sādhakas* who are extremely fortunate, who have remained in the association of *sādhus*, and who have taken shelter of *harināma*, which is the best of the limbs of *bhakti*, are appointed to the service of Bhagavān.

When taking shelter of *harināma*, there is no consideration of regulations such as taking formal initiation (*dīkṣā*) and preliminary purifying activities (*puraścaryā*). They avoid chanting a mere semblance of the holy name (*nāmābhāsa*) and chanting with offences (*nāmāparādha*), and gradually they come to the point of continuous chanting. While chanting incessantly and meditating on the merciful glance of the deity, they constantly meditate on the holy name and the deity's beautiful form. Gradually they begin to review the aggregate of the qualities of the deity, His form and name all at once. Immediately thereafter they begin to reflect on all of these, as well as the pastimes in accordance with their own eternal identities (*svarūpa*). Gradually *rasa* also appears – this is the ultimate attainment. One special point worthy of attention is that the appearance of *rasa* occurs within a very short time if from the very beginning of the cultivation of *nāma* the *sādhaka* anxiously longs for *rasa* to appear.

Love for Kṛṣṇa is the ultimate objective of the jīva

The *parama-puruṣārtha*, or the supreme goal of life, is *prema*. This is the principle for which Brahmā, the grandfather of the universe, and Mahādeva Śiva, the god of gods, are searching. It is also the most sought-after object for the liberated *jīvas*. It is the one and only object of attainment of all spiritual practices (*sādhanas*), and it is the ultimate goal delineated throughout the entire body of the *śāstras*. In *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, in the section known as *rūpa-śikṣā*, *jagad-guru* Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu says:

> *brahmāṇḍa bhramite kona bhāgyavān jīva*
> *guru-kṛṣṇa-prasāde pāya bhakti-latā-bīja*
>
> *mālī haṅā kare seī bīja āropaṇa*
> *śravaṇa-kīrtana-jale karaye secana*
>
> *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*
> (*Madhya-līlā* 19.151–152)

After wandering for a long, long time in this material existence, some fortunate *jīva*, by the mercy of *guru* and Kṛṣṇa, attains the seed of the creeper of devotion (*bhakti-latā-bīja*) in the form of *kṛṣṇa-sevā-vāsanā*, the desire to serve Kṛṣṇa. He waters that seed with the water of hearing (*śravaṇa*) and chanting (*kīrtana*). It begins to sprout, and develops into a creeper.

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'prema-phala' pāki' paḍe, mālī āsvādaya
latā avalambi' mālī 'kalpa-vṛkṣa' pāya

tāhāṅ sei kalpa-vṛksera karaye sevana
sukhe prema-phala-rasa kare āsvādana

eita parama phala 'parama-puruṣārtha'
jāṅra āge tṛṇa-tulya cāri puruṣārtha

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta
(*Madhya-līlā* 19.162–164)

The creeper pierces the coverings of the universe, and one after another traverses the Virajā, the impersonal *brahma-jyoti* and the spiritual planets of Vaikuṇṭha. Finally, it climbs up the desire-tree of Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet in Goloka Vṛndāvana. There it bears fruits in the form of *prema*. When the fruit becomes ripe, it falls here in this world, and the gardener tastes it. Taking support from that creeper of devotion (*bhakti-latā*), he takes shelter of the desire-tree of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet and always tastes the transcendental mellow (*rasa*) of the fruit of *prema*. This very *prema* is the crest jewel of all achievements for the *jīva*.

If *prema* is compared to the sun, then *bhāva* is likened to a ray of that *prema*. In his definition of *bhāva*, Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī says:

śuddha-sattva-viśeṣātmā
prema-suryāṁśu-sāmya-bhāk
rucibhiś citta māsṛṇya-
kṛd asau bhāva ucyate

Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.3.1)

That *bhakti* which is the embodiment of *śuddha-sattva*, which is compared to a ray of the sun of *prema*, and which melts the heart by various tastes, is called *bhāva*.

When *śuddha-sattva* in the form of *bhāva* becomes mature, it evokes very thick *mamatā*, or feelings of possessiveness, for the object of one's service, and this makes the heart extremely soft. Such *bhāva*, imbued with very thick *mamatā*, is called *prema*.

samyaṅ masṛṇita-svānto
mamatvātiśayāṅkitaḥ
bhāvaḥ sa eva sāndrātmā
budhaiḥ premā nigadyate

Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.4.1)

This can be expressed as follows: The *saṁvit* function of the self-manifesting *svarūpa-śakti* is called *śuddha-sattva*. *Bhāva* imbued with very thick *mamatā* for Kṛṣṇa is the special function of the *hlādinī* aspect of *cit-śakti*. That supremely astonishing *bhāva* which arises when these two mix together in the heart of a pure *jīva* is called *viśuddha-prema*.

When *bhāva*, or *rati*, which is the sprout of *prema*, arises in the heart of the *sādhaka*, its intrinsic nature produces the following collection of *anubhāvas*: *kṣānti*, tolerance; *avyartha-kālatva*, the habit of never wasting even a single moment; *virakti*, detachment from worldly enjoyment; *māna-śūnyatā*, absence of pride; *āśā-bandha*, the hope that Kṛṣṇa will bestow His mercy; *samutkaṇṭhā*, intense longing to attain one's goal; *nāma-gāne sadā rucih*, continuous taste in *nāma-kīrtana*; *tad-guṇākhyāne āsakti*, attachment for the narrations of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes; and *tad-vasati-sthale prītiḥ*, affection for the places of His pastimes.

The beginning stage of *prema* is *rati*. When this *rati* becomes highly intensified it is called *prema*. This *rati* is evoked in two ways: (1) by the mercy of Śrī Kṛṣṇa or His devotees, and

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(2) by absorption in *sādhana*. In this world, *rati* is generally born of absorption in *sādhana*. The appearance of *rati* born purely from mercy is rarely seen.

The *rati* arising from absorption in *sādhana* is also of two types: (1) *rati* arising from *vaidhī-bhakti-sādhana*; and (2) *rati* arising from *rāgānuga-bhakti-sādhana*. The *rati* arising from *vaidhī-sādhana-bhakti* is full of reverence for Bhagavān's majesty and leads to Vaikuṇṭha. In contrast, the *rati* arising from *rāgānuga-sādhana-bhakti* is full of the loving service to Kṛṣṇa in Vraja.

Rāgātmika-bhakti is always present in the associates of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in Vraja. The devotion which follows in the wake of this *bhakti* is called *rāgānuga*. *Rāgānuga-bhakti* has two types of *sādhana*: external and internal. External *sādhana* consists of practices such as hearing and chanting which the *sādhaka* performs by the body in which he is presently situated. The service performed throughout the eight periods of the day to the Divine Couple Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Yugala in Vraja is called internal *mānasī-sevā*.

Highly developed affection (*prīti*), experienced merely as joy in the first stage when it has not yet blossomed, is called *rati*. This is attained in *śānta-rasa*. When *rati* arises, everything except for service to Kṛṣṇa seems insignificant. When profuse *mamatā* appears within such *rati*, then it is called *prema*. This is realized in *dāsya-rasa*. That love in which there is a higher sense of complete confidence, and which becomes even thicker despite the presence of causes for its destruction is called *praṇaya*. This is observed in *sakhya-rasa*. When this *praṇaya* assumes a surprising and unusual state of *prema*, it is called *māna*. That

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intense *prema* which makes the heart extremely molten is called *sneha*.

When *sneha* is imbued with intense longing it is known as *rāga*. With the appearance of *rāga*, even a moment of separation is intolerable, and at that time, distress is felt as happiness. When *rāga* always experiences its object (the most beloved Kṛṣṇa) in ever-fresh ways then it is called *anurāga*. In this stage there is *visphūrti* (the condition of being bereft of external knowledge) at the time of separation. When that *anurāga* becomes more condensed and attains an incomparably astonishing condition like madness (*unmāda*), it is called *mahābhāva*. When *mahābhāva* arises, even the blinking of one's eyelids at the time of meeting produces an intolerable separation, and even a *kalpa* (4,320,000,000 years) passes away like a moment. In *anurāga* and *mahābhāva*, the combination of all transformations such as *sāttvika* and *vyabhicārī* is observed in a highly blazing (*mahādīpta*) condition. This very *mahābhāva* is the intrinsic nature of Śrīmatī Rādhikā, whose each and every limb is made of *mahābhāva*.

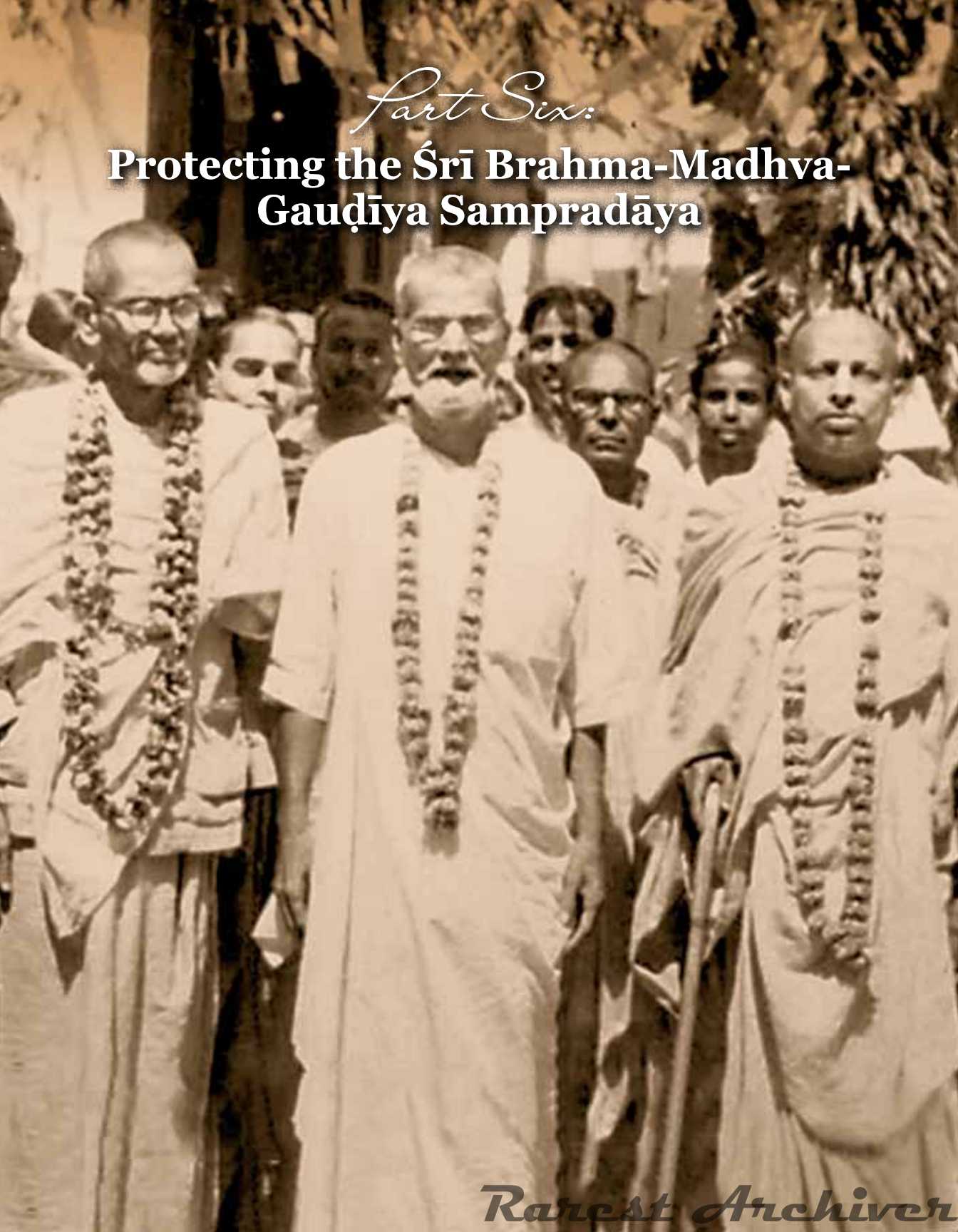
This is the teaching of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and it has been described by Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura in a condensed form:

ārādhyo bhagavān vrajeśa-tanaya-
stad-dhāma vṛndāvanaṁ
ramyā kācid upāsanā vraja-vadhū-
vargeṇa yā kalpitā
śrīmad-bhāgavataṁ pramāṇam amalaṁ
premā pumartho mahān
śrī-caitanya-mahāprabhor matam idaṁ
tatrādaro naḥ paraḥ

Both Bhagavān Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the magnificent Śrī Dhāma Vṛndāvana are the exclusive objects of worship. The mood in which the young brides of Vraja have worshipped Kṛṣṇa is the most excellent of all. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* alone is the immaculate evidence (*śabda-pramāṇa*) and *prema* is the supreme objective of life. This is the supremely worshipful *siddhānta* of Caitanya Mahāprabhu. There is no other conception worthy of respect.

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Part Six:
Protecting the Śrī Brahma-Madhva-Gauḍīya Sampradāya

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Jagad-guru nitya-līlā-praviṣṭa aṣṭottara-śata Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Ṭhākura preached extensively, and in a very short time spread throughout the world the pure *bhakti*, or *prema-bhakti*, as practised and promulgated by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. It is by his great endeavour that the sound of the *mahā-mantra* – Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare, Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare – is resounding in every part of the world today. After his entrance into the eternal pastimes of the Lord, the preaching current of pure *bhakti* greatly diminished. At that time, the followers of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, especially the Sārasvata Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, were attacked from all sides. Some so-called Sārasvata Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas were loudly propagating their own ideas. In this dire situation, our *śrīla gurudeva, aṣṭottara-śata* Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, who was *jagad-guru* Śrīla Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda's intimate associate, accepted *sannyāsa* by Śrīla Prabhupāda's inspiration. He then tirelessly endeavoured until the end of his life to preach and spread his *gurudeva's* inner heart's desire. We are presenting herein a brief account of how he made the current of *bhakti* flow once again throughout the world and how he protected his *sampradāya*.

Śrīla Gurupāda-padma was a powerful and profoundly philosophical *ācārya*, adorned with immense genius and knowledge of *tattva*. He preached pure *bhakti* in two ways. First, he used scriptural evidence to establish the ideas practised and preached by Śrīman Mahāprabhu. Second, he refuted opinions that opposed *siddhānta*, such as the anti-devotional *kevalādvaita-vāda*, or *māyāvāda* (which is a hidden form of Buddhism), *sahajiyā*, *smārta* and *jāti-vaiṣṇava*, all of which are opposed to *śuddha-bhakti*.

It was Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, the Seventh Gosvāmī, who reinitiated the flow of *bhakti* when it had dwindled and almost disappeared. He preached in the modern world the essential aspects of Vaiṣṇava philosophy, such as *bhagavat-tattva*, *śakti-tattva*, *bhakti-tattva*, *māyā-tattva* and *acintya-bhedābheda-tattva*. Śrīla Gurudeva often declared that Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's *Daśa-mūla-tattva* is the singular essence of all the literatures of the Śrī Gauḍīya *sampradāya*, including those of the six Gosvāmīs. Śrīla Gurudeva accepted *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* as the immaculate scriptural evidence and the natural commentary on *Vedānta-sūtra*. Furthermore, he said that the *nāma-prema-dharma* (the religion of chanting the holy name in pure love), practised and propagated by Śrīman Mahāprabhu, is the actual subject matter of Vedānta. In order to establish these three points, he expressed the desire to publish a commentary expounding the glories of *śrī harināma*, based on the doctrine of *śabda-vāda* found in *Vedānta-sūtra*.

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Śrīla Gurudeva also wanted to publish a commentary based on the devotional conclusions of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. He collected various written materials and began to prepare an outline of these two compositions, but he could not complete it because of his sudden entrance into *nitya-līlā*. It was observed at times that it was also his keen desire to publish commentaries on all the prominent Upaniṣads according to the viewpoints of his *sampradāya*.

Refutation of pure monism (kevalādvaita-vāda)

Śrīla Gurudeva was clearly of the opinion that pure *bhakti* cannot possibly be propagated as long as the covered Buddhist doctrine of *māyāvāda* is present in the world. He therefore refuted *māyāvāda* with powerful scriptural evidence and incontrovertible arguments, which we shall now summarize.

(1) *Kevalādvaita-vāda* propounded by Śaṅkara Ācārya is not Vedic. According to this doctrine, that *brahma* who is devoid of attributes (*nirviśeṣa*), without qualities (*nirguṇa*) and devoid of potency (*niḥśakti*) is the Supreme Truth. Due to ignorance, illusion is created in that *brahma*, who then identifies as a living entity or the material world. Yet the question arises, "To whom does this illusion belong?" Some *māyāvādīs* say that this illusion belongs to the living entity (*jīva*) in the grip of ignorance. Others say that *brahma* comes under illusion and identifies as a living entity or the material world.

Śrīla Gurudeva would say that both of these opinions are mistaken and opposed to the meaning of the Vedas. To consider that *brahma* is afflicted by ignorance is thoroughly illogical and contrary to *śāstra*. According to the Upaniṣads, *brahma* is real, all-knowing and limitless (*satyaṁ jñānam anantaṁ brahma, Taittirīya Upaniṣad* 2.1). Apart from *brahma* there is no other substance (*ekam evādvitīyam, Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 6.2.1). *Brahma* is described as the embodiment of knowledge; the embodiment of truth, past, present and future; unlimited; one without a second; and the embodiment of bliss. How, then, can *brahma* be afflicted by ignorance? Furthermore, where did a second substance, a substance called ignorance, come from? An ignorance that can overcome *brahma* does not exist, being neither eternal nor real. How can ignorance touch *brahma*? It is impossible.

One may assert [according to their monistic philosophy] that it is the *jīva* [not *brahma*] that is in illusion, but that is also quite illogical. What is the origin of this independent *jīva-tattva* that is separate from *brahma*? If the answer is that *brahma* was afflicted by ignorance and became the *jīva*, then *brahma*, not the *jīva*, was the original shelter of this ignorance (*avidyā*).

(2) Some *māyāvādīs* say that *brahma* is not covered by the deluding external energy (*māyā*). Rather, Īśvara (the Supreme Lord) is the reflection of *brahma* in ignorance, and the living entity is the semblance of *brahma* in ignorance. They say that since the reflection (the Supreme Lord) and the semblance (the living entity) have no transcendental existence, both are false. The *māyāvādīs* explain this with the example of mistaking a rope for a snake or an oyster shell

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for silver. The rope's apparent condition of being a snake is false, but people make such a mistake because a rope and a snake are somewhat similar in appearance. Similarly, the illusion of identifying as *jīva* or *jagat* can arise in *brahma*, but this is quite false.

Śrīla Gurudeva pointed out that this *māyāvāda* doctrine is opposed to scripture and logic. The *māyāvādīs* say that ignorance, *avidyā*, is not real: "It is neither existent nor non-existent and thus indescribable." This is actually equivalent to saying that ignorance is false (because its existence is neither spiritual nor worldly). But it is totally impossible for ignorance to cover *brahma*. Furthermore, if *brahma* is undivided, formless, unlimited and without attributes, how, as they say, can it be reflected in ignorance? For *brahma* to be reflected, it would have to be divided, defined, possessed of attributes and limited, and *avidyā* would have to be a separate, individual and real substance.

There is another objection. In the example of mistaking a rope for a snake, there are three separate and real substances: the snake, the rope and the person making the observation. Now, what does this example tell us about *brahma*, the *jīva* and ignorance (*māyā*, the external deluding potency)? Does it imply that these three substances are also real and distinct from each other? If the *māyāvādīs* accept such a proposal, the glass palace of *māyāvāda* collapses in self-destruction.

Another point is that throughout the Vedas, the Upaniṣads and *Vedānta-sūtra*, it is stated that *brahma* is the creator of the universe, and that *brahma* is omniscient, omnipotent, and the unequalled and unsurpassed Supreme Truth. For example:

yato vā imāni bhūtāni jāyante
yena jātāni jīvanti
yat prayanty abhisaṁviśanti
tad vijijñāsasva tad brahma

Taittirīya Upaniṣad (3.1)

janmādy asya yataḥ

Vedānta-sūtra (1.1.2)

tad viṣṇoḥ paramaṁ padaṁ
sadā paśyanti sūrayoḥ
divīva cakṣurātatam

Ṛg Veda (1.5.22.20)

sa īkṣata

Aitareya Upaniṣad (1.1.1)

If the *māyāvādīs'* opinion were to be accepted, then these statements from Śruti would be nothing more than false, incoherent ramblings.

(3) Some *māyāvādīs* put forward the following theory: *Avidyā*, ignorance, is composed of the three modes of material nature, namely, goodness (*sattva*), passion (*raja*) and ignorance (*tama*); and that ignorance is dependent on *brahma*. In other words, they say that ignorance has accepted the shelter of *brahma*. This ignorance is known as *māyā*, and its characteristics are *vikṣepa-śakti*, the potency that throws the living entity into illusion, and *āvaraṇa-śakti*, the potency that covers the living entity's knowledge. The *jīva*, then, is the reflection of the conscious *brahma* in the covering potency, and Īśvara is the reflection of the conscious *brahma* in the potency that throws one into illusion. Thus the reflection of *brahma*, Īśvara, is non-different

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from the reflected living entity, in terms of material designations. Thus, Īśvara thinks in terms of 'I am the creator of the material world' and the *jīva* thinks, 'I do not know who I am'.

Sound scriptural contemplation and reasoning, however, prove that this doctrine is not authentic. The concept that ignorance exists within the pure and self-manifest Supreme Transcendental Entity (*brahma-vastu*) is a complete contradiction, for the nature of the two is directly opposite. If this doctrine were to be taken as truth – that by nature, there is no fundamental difference between *brahma* and *avidyā* – then ignorance would perpetually support itself and would continually afflict *brahma* with material designations, because there is no one to destroy it. This is thoroughly absurd. In the following *mantras* of the Upaniṣads, *brahma* has been accepted as the unequalled and unsurpassed Supreme Truth (*asamorddhva para-tattva*), the witness of the *jīvas*, the regulator of the results of *karma*, and the inconceivable, omnipotent entity by whose mercy one can easily be released from *māyā*. How, then, can *brahma* be subject to the attack of *māyā*?

dvā suparṇā sayujā sakhāyā samānaṁ
vṛkṣaṁ pariṣasvajāte
tayor anyaḥ pippalaṁ
svādv attyanaśnann anyo abhicākaśīti

Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad (4.6),
Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad (3.1.1),
Ṛg Veda (1.22.164.20)

Paramātmā and the *jīvātmā* reside like two friendly birds on the branch of a *pīpala* tree, which represents the gross and subtle body. The *jīva* tastes the *pīpala* fruits according to his fruitive activities whereas Paramātmā does not taste the fruit. He is situated as a witness.

This shows that the *jīvātmā* and Paramātmā are not one.

mayādhyakṣeṇa prakṛtiḥ
sūyate sa-carācaram

Bhagavad-gītā (9.10)

Śrī Kṛṣṇa says, "My *prakṛti* (*māyā-śakti*) is the creator of this world of moving and non-moving entities." Thus the world is also real and true, but by nature it is mutable and destructible. This statement establishes that Kṛṣṇa is *śaktimān*, the possessor of potency.

na tasya kāryaṁ karaṇaṁ ca vidyate
na tat samaś cābhyadhikaś ca dṛśyate
parāsya śaktir vividhaiva śrūyate
svābhāvikī jñāna-bala-kriyā ca

Śvetāśvatāra Upaniṣad (6.8)

Para-brahma Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the unequalled and unsurpassed truth. None of His senses, such as hands and feet, are material by nature. Since He has no material senses, He performs all activities with transcendental senses. It has been heard that Parameśvara has various types of divine potency, among which three, *jñāna-śakti*, *bala-śakti* and *kriya-śakti*, are prominent. They are also known as *cit-śakti*, *sandhinī-śakti* and *hlādinī-śakti*, respectively.

yam evaiṣa vṛṇute tena labhya-
stasyaiṣa ātmā vivṛṇute tanūṁ svām

Kaṭha Upaniṣad (1.2.23),
Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad (3.2.3)

It is by His own mercy that the Lord only reveals His transcendental form to one whom He Himself accepts.

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nityo nityānāṁ cetanaś cetanānām
eko bahūnāṁ yo vidadhāti kāmān

Kaṭha Upaniṣad (2.2.13),
Śvetāśvatāra Upaniṣad (6.13)

He is the Supreme Eternal amongst all eternal entities, the Supreme Conscious Being among all conscious beings. Even though He is one, He fulfils the desires of all.

Māyāvādīs say that *brahma* is knowledge (*jñāna*), not the knower, or possessor of knowledge. This being the case, one could not possibly imagine *brahma* to have any relationship with ignorance. Ignorance may be seen for some time in the knower or in one who possesses knowledge, but nescience (*ajñāna*) is never evident in a substance constituted exclusively of knowledge. This is completely impossible because knowledge (*jñāna*) and ignorance (*ajñāna*) have mutually contradictory characteristics.

(4) Some *māyāvādīs* say, "Ignorance exists from time without beginning and does not need the support of a second substance. It is due to this ignorance that the dualities of existence, such as the *jīva*, are imagined to exist in *brahma*."

If this is the case, who is the one imagining in ignorance? If there is no second entity to imagine anything, then it must be the natural *dharma* of ignorance to conceive of dualities such as the *jīva*. Yet an object's intrinsic nature, such as fire's power to burn, is inherent and can never be given up. Since such a conclusion is against *kevalādvaita-vāda*, it therefore invalidates it.

(5) In Section 2, the *māyāvādīs'* theory of reflection is discussed. This idea is contrary to *śāstra* and to logic. We only see the reflection of the sun in water because the reflection, the sun and the water each have their specific characteristics. But the *māyāvādīs* say that the invisible *brahma*, which is formless and without limbs or attributes, is reflected in a shapeless *avidyā* to produce a reflection that is neither real nor unreal, nor is it simultaneously real and unreal. This is simply impossible.

(6) There is yet another objection to the *māyāvādī's* imaginative theory of reflection. The reflection of an observer's face in a mirror is separate from the observer himself. Yet if the forms of the *jīva* and Īśvara are reflections, then which separate observer observes this reflection? Furthermore, if *brahma* and the *jīva* are taken to be reflections, then they must be inanimate like the visible materials of the universe. (All kinds of philosophers generally maintain that all the visible materials of the universe are inert.) Therefore, this idea is also completely illogical.

(7) A reflected object is inert, with no capacity either to imagine its identity or destroy it. Thus, according to the theory of reflection, the reflected *jīva* is also unable to conceive of itself as *brahma* or destroy the ignorance of its false designation by genuine knowledge. Now, according to the *māyāvādīs*, *mokṣa*, or liberation, is the destruction of the ignorance that has taken shelter of the pure *brahma*. But if the *jīva* cannot even destroy its own ignorance, how can he possibly destroy the ignorance of *brahma*? It is impossible.

(8) [*Māyāvādīs* say that the *jīva* is a reflection of *brahma*, but when we consider the essential

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differences between an object of vision and its reflection, we see that this theory is quite inconsistent.] The resting places of an object of vision and its reflection are separate, which is why our direct perception of them is different. The sun and the sun's reflection each have their own separate, individual resting places. The sun resides in the sky, while its reflection resides in water. An object and its reflection can never be one under any circumstances, because they are fundamentally different from each other. For instance, the reflection is inverted and the limbs appear to be on the wrong side. Besides, a reflection is invariably unconscious, even if that which is reflected is conscious. Since the *māyāvādīs* say that *brahma* is like the original and the *jīva* is the reflection, the theory of reflection actually teaches us that the *jīva* and *brahma* can never be one.

(9) According to the aforementioned doctrine, the *jīva* is consciousness reflected in the covering potency (*āvaraṇa-śakti*) of illusion, while Īśvara is consciousness reflected in the throwing potency of illusion (*vikṣepa-śakti*). In other words, the *jīva* and Īśvara are situated in their separate individual designations. This opposes the statement of *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* that Īśvara is present in the hearts of all living beings.

(10) Suppose we accept that Īśvara is consciousness reflected in *māyā*, that *māyā* is not the *śakti* of *brahma*, and that Īśvara is without potencies. Then all the opulences of Īśvara mentioned in *śāstra* would be invalidated. Everywhere in *śāstra*, such as the Upaniṣads and Vedānta, Īśvara has been described as the repository of the six opulences:

aiśvaryasya samagrasya
vīryasya yaśasaḥ śriyaḥ
jñāna-vairāgyayoś caiva
ṣaṇṇāṁ bhaga itīṅganā

Viṣṇu Purāṇa (6.5.74)

One who is complete in the six opulences of wealth, power, fame, beauty, knowledge and renunciation is known as Bhagavān.

This *mantra* must be invalid if the *māyāvāda* doctrine is accepted.

(11) *Māyāvādīs* say, "*Brahma* is exclusively composed of *jñāna* (knowledge), and its relationship with *avidyā* (ignorance) is simply false conjecture." If it is so, then the aforementioned doctrine can never be established, because the imaginary water of a mirage cannot be used for anything. In the same way that the existence of an object can never be established simply by observing an imaginary reflection, then similarly the reality of *brahma* cannot be ascertained simply by observing its imaginary reflection within illusion. This is because the *jīva* and Īśvara are supposed to arise by reflection of *brahma* in ignorance. But *māyāvādīs* say that *avidyā* has no reality whatsoever. Therefore, the reflection in the form of *jīva* and Īśvara can never arise by the imaginary connection of ignorance with *brahma*.

(12) Śrī Śaṅkara Ācārya states, "*brahma satyaṁ jagan mithyā jīvo brahmaiva nāparaḥ* – *brahma* is true, the phenomenal world is false, and the *jīva* is *brahma*." To support this opinion, he has accepted four contextual statements from the Vedas and has very cunningly tried to describe them as the chief statements, or *mahā-vākyas*, of the Vedas.

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Actually, throughout the Vedas, it is *oṁkāra* that is accepted as the *mahā-vākya*. These four statements are never described as such anywhere. Besides, their meaning completely opposes Śaṅkara Ācārya's conclusions, so he has crushed his own doctrine to powder by introducing them.

The four contextual statements are as follows: *ahaṁ brahmāsmi*, *prajñānaṁ brahma*, *sarvaṁ khalv idaṁ brahma* and *tat tvam asi śvetaketo*. The real purport of these four statements is that the relationship between the *jīva* and *brahma* is that of the servant and the served, and is of the nature of *prema*. In *tat tvam asi śvetaketo* it has been distinctly stated, "*śvetaketo! tvaṁ tasya asi* – Śvetaketu, you are His!" In *sarvaṁ khalv idaṁ brahma*, the word *idam* shows that this world is *brahma* in the sense that it is manifested by the *satya-saṅkalpa-śakti* of *brahma*, that is, the potency by which He (*brahma*) manifests the world according to His desire. This is because in literatures such as the *Brahma-sūtra*, the potency (*śakti*) and the possessor of potency (*śaktimān*) have been considered non-different.

[Śrī Śaṅkara Ācārya quotes the statement, *sarvaṁ khalv idaṁ brahma*, and at the same time tries to establish that the world is false.] If everything of this world is *brahma*, then how did the whole universe become false like a dream? In that case, the Vedas, Upaniṣads and other scriptures that Śaṅkara Ācārya quotes must all be false because they have manifested in this world. By the same logic, Śaṅkara Ācārya and his whole *guru-paramparā* must also be false. In any case, what was the necessity for Śaṅkara Ācārya to instruct the false people of a false world? Thus the whole conclusion of the *māyāvādīs* is an imaginative concoction opposed to scripture.

(13) Followers of Śaṅkara have described the world as false (*mithyā*). However, if they are asked, "Is your 'universal falseness' true or false?" they can neither reply 'falseness is true' nor 'falseness is false'. If they say that falseness is true, then the truth of 'the falsehood of the world' presents itself as another truth that exists in the presence of the reality, or truth, of *brahma*. However, this invalidates *advaita-vāda*, because *brahma* is the only truth without a second. Besides, if there is another truth, then the Vedic *mantra*, "*ekam evādvitīyaṁ brahma – brahma* is one without a second", is lost.

Conversely, if Śaṅkara's followers accept the falsehood that the world is false, then they affirm the truth of the world. [And so they directly oppose the teaching *brahma satyaṁ jagan mithyā*.] It is quite clear that the *māyāvādīs'* conclusion that the material world (*jagat*) is false is neither Vedic nor logical.

The protection of his sampradāya

The followers of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu accept the Śrī Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya* as the Brahma-Madhva-Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya* on the strength of the *guru-paramparā*. This is mentioned by the prominent Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* Śrīla Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī, Śrī Kavi Karṇapūra and Gauḍīya Vedānta Ācārya Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa. Thus Gauḍīyas consider themselves to be a branch of the Śrī Madhva *sampradāya*. Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas*

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such as Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, Śrī Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and *jagad-guru* Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī have also accepted this opinion. However these days some people are trying to establish their own concocted opinion that the Śrī Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya* is an independent *sampradāya* of which Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is the original founder.

Śrī Sundarānanda Vidyāvinoda and Śrī Ananta Vāsudeva, together with a few others, turned against their own *guru* and tried to prove that the *sampradāya* of Śrīman Mahāprabhu is not included in the Śrī Brahma-Madhva *sampradāya*. They claim instead that it is included in the impersonalist *advaita-vādī sampradāya*. Originally, Śrī Sundarānanda Vidyāvinoda Mahodaya accepted in his *Ācārya Śrī Madhva* that Mahāprabhu's *sampradāya* is part of the Śrī Madhva *sampradāya*. However, afterwards he considered that his own previous evidence was not authentic. In his later book *Acintya-bhedābheda*, he tried unsuccessfully to prove that the Śrī Gauḍīya *sampradāya* is an independent *sampradāya*. All the arguments of the party opposing the fact that the Śrī Gauḍīya *sampradāya* is in the Śrī Madhva *sampradāya* are found in his book.

Paramārādhya ācārya kesarī Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, who is a lion for the elephant-like heretics, himself wrote an essay entitled *Acintya-bhedābheda*, wherein he presents scriptural evidence and indisputable reasoning to refute all the arguments in Sundarānanda Vidyāvinoda's book. This essay has been published in several issues of the Bengali *Śrī Gauḍīya-patrikā* and the Hindi *Śrī Bhāgavata-patrikā*. We shall now briefly present some of those arguments and evidence.

The Śrī Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava sampradāya is in the line of Śrī Madhva



Śrīla Madhvācārya

First we shall mention some prominent arguments put forward by Śrī Sundarānanda Vidyāvinoda.

Objection 1: "According to *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* and *Śrī Caitanya-candrodaya-nāṭaka*, Śrī Caitanyadeva accepted *sannyāsa* from a *kevalādvaita-vāda sannyāsī*, Śrī Keśava Bhāratī, and He referred to Himself as a *māyāvāda sannyāsī*. In addition to this, Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī, who was the *guru* of the *māyāvāda sannyāsīs* of Kāśī, also described Him as a *sannyāsī* from a *māyāvādī sampradāya* (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā* 7.66–67):

> *keśava-bhāratīra śiṣya, tāte tumi dhanya*
> *sāmpradāyika sannyāsī tumi, raha ei grāme*

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You are greatly fortunate to be a disciple of Śrī Keśava Bhāratī, You are a *sannyāsī* of our *māyāvāda sampradāya*, and You also reside in this village.

"Sarvabhauma Bhattācārya has also accepted this: '*bhāratī-sampradāya ei—hayena madhyama* – He is within the Bhāratī *sampradāya* and therefore a second-class *sannyāsī*' (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā* 6.72)."

Refutation: This argument of the opposing party is totally unfounded. After a *jīva* has realized that material existence in the chain of birth and death is useless and distressful, he can recognize that the attainment of service to the lotus feet of Bhagavān is the supreme auspiciousness. Therefore, one who is extremely fortunate accepts both initiation (*dīkṣā*) and instructions (*śikṣā*) from a person who is thoroughly versed in the Vedic scriptures (*śabda-brahma*), who is adorned with realization of Bhagavān and who is detached from sense gratification. That *jīva* then enters into *paramārtha*, the acquisition of his highest spiritual objective. In Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's human-like pastimes (*nara-līlā*), He went to Gayā-dhāma on the pretext of making offerings for the benefit of His deceased father (*pitṛ-śrāddha*). There He offered Himself fully at the lotus feet of Śrī Īśvara Purīpāda, who was the bud of the desire-tree of *prema* and also a supremely *rasika* and *bhāvuka* disciple of Śrī Mādhavendra Purī, the root of that desire-tree.

prabhu bale,—"gayā-yātrā saphala āmāra
yata-kṣaṇe dekhilāṅa caraṇa tomāra

Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata
(*Ādi-khaṇḍa* 17.50)

The Lord said: My journey to Gayā is successful, because I am able to see your lotus feet.

saṁsāra-samudra haite uddhāraha more
ei āmi deha samarpilāṅa tomāre

kṛṣṇa-pāda-padmera amṛta-rasa pāna
āmāre karāo tumi'—ei cāhi dāna

Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata
(*Ādi-khaṇḍa* 17.54–55)

Please deliver Me from the ocean of material existence. I offer Myself completely to you. Please enable Me to drink the nectar of the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. I beg this charity from you.

āra dine nibhṛte īśvara-purī-sthāne
mantra-dīkṣā cāhilena madhura-vacane

Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata
(*Ādi-khaṇḍa* 17.105)

On another day in a solitary place, with sweet words, He requested Śrī Īśvara Purī to initiate Him into the *kṛṣṇa-mantra*.

tabe tāna sthāne śikṣā-guru nārāyaṇa
karilena daśākṣara-mantrera grahaṇa

Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata
(*Ādi-khaṇḍa* 17.107)

The instructing spiritual master of the three worlds, Śrī Nārāyaṇa Himself, accepted initiation into the ten-syllable *mantra* from Śrī Īśvara Purī.

According to this section of *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata*, Śrī Nimāī Paṇḍita performed the pastime of surrendering His heart at the feet of Śrī Īśvara Purī. He prayed to him for the *dīkṣā-mantra* in order to get release from material existence and to attain *śrī kṛṣṇa-prema*, and Śrī Purīpāda very affectionately initiated Him into the ten-syllable *mantra*.

Sometime afterwards, Śrī Nimāī Paṇḍita accepted *sannyāsa* in Kaṭvā from the *advaita-*

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vāda sannyāsī Keśava Bhāratī. After accepting *sannyāsa*, He set off for Vṛndāvana, saturated in the madness of *prema*. When He arrived in Rāḍha-deśa, absorbed in *prema*, He chanted a verse from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.23.57):

etāṁ sa āsthāya parātma-niṣṭhā-
madhyāsitāṁ pūrvatamair maharṣibhiḥ
ahaṁ tariṣyāmi duranta-pāraṁ
tamo mukundāṅghri-niṣevayaiva

I shall easily cross over the insurmountable ocean of ignorance by rendering service to the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, which were worshipped by the great *ṛṣis* of ancient times, who were fixed in firm devotion to Mukunda.

prabhu kahe,—sādhu ei bhikṣuka-vacana
mukunda sevana-vrata kaila nirdhāraṇa

parātma-niṣṭhā-mātra veśa-dhāraṇa
mukunda-sevāya haya saṁsāra-tāraṇa

sei veśa kaila, ebe vṛndāvana giyā
kṛṣṇa-niṣevaṇa kari nibhṛte vasiyā

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta
(*Madhya-līlā* 3.7–9)

After accepting *sannyāsa*, Mahāprabhu said, "This word of the *tridaṇḍi-bhikṣu* is supremely true because the vow to serve the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is fixed by accepting this dress of the renounced order. Having renounced dedication to material sense objects, the purpose of accepting *sannyāsa* is to attain *parātma-niṣṭhā*, single-pointed devotion to the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. I have accepted this dress, so now I will go to Vṛndāvana and serve the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa."

In the aforementioned verse, the phrase *parātma-niṣṭhā-mātra veśa-dhāraṇa* is particularly worthy of consideration. It indicates that Mahāprabhu only accepted the external dress of the renounced order from Śrī Keśava Bhāratī because that dress was favourable for the cultivation of *bhagavad-bhakti*. He did not accept any *advaita-vāda mantra* or doctrine. On the contrary, throughout His life He refuted *kevalādvaita-vāda* and the philosophical conclusions of *māyāvāda*.

It is clear that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu accepted only Śrī Īśvara Purīpāda as His actual *guru*, because it is Śrī Īśvara Purīpāda's pure *bhakti* that He accepted, preached and propagated throughout His life. Śrī Mādhavendra Purīpāda and Śrī Īśvara Purīpāda are included within the Madhva *sampradāya*, so Śrīman Mahāprabhu and His followers, the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, are also included in the Madhva *sampradāya*. Moreover, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's contemporary pastime associates, Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu, Śrī Advaita Ācārya, Śrī Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi, Brahmānanda Purī and others, are also followers of the Śrī Madhva *sampradāya* because they are all in the line of Śrī Mādhavendra Purī.

Śrīman Mahāprabhu always respected the disciples of Śrī Mādhavendra Purī as His *gurus*, and He treated the disciples of Śrī Īśvara Purī as godbrothers. "*Guru ājñā haya avicāraṇīyā* – one should not question the order of the *guru*." According to this philosophical conclusion, He accepted Govinda as His servant [on the order of His *guru*]. It is proved by this that Īśvara Purī was actually His *guru*.

Objection 2: Because Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu accepted *sannyāsa* from the *kevalādvaita-vādī* Keśava Bhāratī, He is to be included within that *sampradāya*.

Refutation: If for argument's sake we accept this proposition, then it should be noted that Śrī Madhva Ācārya accepted *sannyāsa* from

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Acyutaprekṣa, who also was a *kevalādvaita-vādī*. In that case, if Mahāprabhu is a *kevalādvaita-vādī sannyāsī*, then by the same logic, Madhva Ācārya is also. Where, then, is the obstacle to Śrīman Mahāprabhu's being in the Madhva *sampradāya*, if both of them accepted the *advaita-vādī* Śaṅkara's *sampradāya*?

A second point is that Śrī Madhva Ācārya accepted *eka-daṇḍa* (a single staff indicating the renunciation of the monists) according to the customs and regulations of the Śaṅkara *sampradāya*. It would be logically consistent to say that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu followed his ideal example, and also accepted *eka-daṇḍa sannyāsa* from a *sannyāsī* of the Śaṅkara *sampradāya*, namely Śrī Keśava Bhāratī. From this it seems clear that Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas are in the line of Śrī Madhva Ācārya.

Objection 3: Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *ācārya* Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī has not mentioned any sort of relationship between the Gauḍīya *sampradāya* and the Madhva *sampradāya* anywhere in his writings such as *Tattva-sandarbha* or *Sarva-saṁvādinī*. This idea has been introduced by Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, who was initiated into the Madhva *sampradāya* in the early part of his life and only later entered the Gauḍīya *sampradāya*. For this reason, he had a natural inclination towards the Madhva *sampradāya*. Therefore, Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa has forced the issue out of prejudice, and has mentioned the Śrī Madhva *sampradāya* in his commentary on *Tattva-sandarbha*. In his *Prameya-ratnāvalī*, he delineated a *guru-paramparā* that includes Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His *sampradāya* within the Śrī Madhva *sampradāya*.

Refutation: These accusations are completely groundless and imaginative fabrications. Actually, Jīva Gosvāmī acknowledged the *tattva-vāda* of Śrī Madhva Ācārya, the very *guru* of *tattva-vāda*, and took support from it when he compiled his *Tattva-sandarbha*, *Bhagavat-sandarbha* and so on. Not only this, but he also cited in his writings the main substantiating verses of *tattva-vāda*, such as *vadanti tat tattva-vidas tattvam* (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.2.11).

Among the four Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya-ācāryas*, only Madhva Ācārya is celebrated as *tattva-vādī*. In the Madhva-Gauḍīya *sampradāya*, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī has personally established *tattva-vāda*, and therefore, the Vaiṣṇavas of that *sampradāya* are *tattva-vādīs*. In the third verse of the auspicious invocation (*maṅgalācaraṇa*) of *Tattva-sandarbha*, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī glorifies his *guru* Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī and his *parama-guru* Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī as *tattvajñāpakau*, the *ācāryas* who proclaim *tattva*. Similarly, the crest jewel of the dynasty of Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas*, Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa Prabhu, has also designated Śrī Rūpa and Śrī Sanātana as *tattvavid-uttamau*, the highest of all those who know fundamental truths, in his commentary on this same verse.

It is clear from this that Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī has offered respect to Śrī Madhva Ācārya, and that Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa has followed Jīva Gosvāmī in also honouring Madhva Ācārya. Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa Prabhu has not shown any prejudice towards Madhva Ācārya. On the contrary, if we compare Jīva Gosvāmī with Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, we find that Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa has glorified the two *gosvāmīs* Śrī Rūpa and Sanātana more than Jīva Gosvāmī has. There is no doubt whatsoever that Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa is situated in the *āmnāya-dhārā*, the transcendental current of conclusive evidence, or the *paramparā*, of Śrī Gaura-Nityānanda

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Prabhus and of Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmīpāda, who immediately follows Them.

According to *bhāgavata-paramparā*, Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa is in the ninth generation from Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu, and according to *pāñcarātrika-paramparā*, he is in the eighth generation. Historians have accepted his *pāñcarātrika-paramparā* as follows: Śrī Nityānanda, Śrī Gaurīdāsa Paṇḍita, Hṛdaya-caitanya, Śyāmānanda Prabhu, Rasikānanda Prabhu, Nayanānanda Prabhu and Śrī Rādhā-Dāmodara. Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa Prabhu is the initiated disciple of this Śrī Rādhā-Dāmodara and is also the most prominent *śikṣā* disciple of Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartī.

Historians have declared that in no branch of the Madhva *guru-paramparā* were there any brilliant scholars of such widespread fame as Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa. In fact, at that time no one in any *sampradāya* anywhere in India equalled Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa's knowledge in logic, in Vedānta and in scriptures, such as the Purāṇas and Itihāsas. It is true that he stayed for some days in the most prominent *maṭha* established by Śrī Madhva Ācārya in Uḍūpī, and that he studied Śrī Madhva's commentary on Vedānta. However, the Śrī Gauḍīya *sampradāya* was more of an influence upon him than the Śrī Madhva *sampradāya*.

It is logical and natural for such a worshipful and scholarly personality as Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa to follow in the lotus footsteps of the most powerful and influential Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* of the Madhva-Gauḍīya *sampradāya*. Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa thoroughly studied the commentary of Madhva and also made a meticulous study of the commentaries of Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja, Bhāskarācārya, Nimbāditya, Vallabha and others. It is illogical to say that he is included in each one of those *sampradāyas* merely because he had studied those groups of philosophers.



Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa

"Historians have declared that in no branch of the Madhva *guru-paramparā* were there any brilliant scholars of such widespread fame as Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa."

Śrī Baladeva Prabhu has described historical events and quoted the conclusions of the previous Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* in many of his books, such as *Govinda-bhāṣya*, *Siddhānta-ratnam*,

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Prameya-ratnāvalī and in his commentary on *Tattva-sandharba*. He has enabled all the philosophers of the world to understand that the Śrī Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya* is included within the Madhva *sampradāya*. In this regard, all the scholars of the world, Eastern and Western, ancient and modern, have bowed their heads in reverence, and have unanimously accepted the philosophical conclusions and opinions of Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa Prabhu.

Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa was sent by Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartī to protect the honour of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya* at Galtā-gaddī in Jaipura. There he defeated the objecting *paṇḍitas* of the Śrī *sampradāya* in a scriptural debate. There are no second opinions about this. Does this not show that Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura personally inspired his *śikṣā* disciple Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa to prove that the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas are in the line of Madhva Ācārya? Śrīla Cakravartī Ṭhākura sent his *dīkṣā* disciple Śrī Kṛṣṇadeva Sārvabhauma with Śrī Baladeva to help him. Had Śrī Cakravartī Ṭhākura not been so aged and weak at that time, he certainly would have gone to Jaipura in person to take part in this debate about the *sampradāya*. He would also have established the very same conclusion as Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa. There is no sound evidence to prove that Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa was first an *ācārya* or disciple in the Madhva *sampradāya*. There may be hearsay and rumours based on imagination, but no one has given any substantial proof.

The opposition party has alleged that Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī has not mentioned anywhere in his writings that Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas are in the line of the Madhva *sampradāya*. This accusation is born of ignorance and is absurd to the extreme. In numerous places in *Tattva-sandarbha*, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī mentions his being in the line of Madhva. Moreover, while composing the Ṣaṭ-sandarbhas, he accepted the guidance of *ācāryas* in the Śrī Madhva *sampradāya*, such as Vijayadhvaja, Śrī Brahmaṇya Tīrtha and Vyāsa Tīrtha, and collected many scriptural proofs from their literatures. It is true that he also quoted statements of Śrī Rāmānuja Ācārya and Śrīdhara Svāmīpāda in many places, but he did not consider them to be previous *ācāryas* of the Śrī Gauḍīya *sampradāya*. Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī has even accepted the statements of sages of different philosophical schools such as Kapila and Pātañjali where they are in accordance with *bhakti*. Nonetheless, that does not mean that he is within those *sampradāyas*. One may establish a specific point of *siddhānta* that supports the view of an *ācārya* of a particular *sampradāya*. That does not mean that one is then a member of that *sampradāya*. Only when one establishes *siddhānta* by taking all the opinions of the *ācārya's* disciple and grand-disciple is he considered to be in that *sampradāya*, otherwise not.

In regard to this topic, we quote a few parts from Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī's *Tattva-sandarbha* (28):

atra ca sva-darśitārtha-viśeṣa prāmāṇyāyaiva, na tu śrīmad-bhāgavata-vākya-prāmāṇyāya pramāṇāni śruti-purāṇādi-vacanāni yathā-dṛṣṭam evodāharaṇīyāni kvacit svayam adṛṣṭākarāṇi ca tattva-vāda-gurūṇām anādhunikānāṁ śrīmacchaṅkar-ācārya-śiṣyatāṁ labdhvāpi śrī-bhagavat-pakṣa-pātena tato vicchidya pracura-pra-cārita-vaiṣṇava-mata-viśeṣāṇāṁ dakṣiṇādi-deśa-vikhyāta-śiṣyopaśiṣyī-bhūta-vijaya-dhvaja-jayatīrtha-brahmaṇyatīrtha-vyāsa-tīrthādi-veda-vedārtha-vidvad-varāṇāṁ śrī-madvācārya-caraṇānāṁ bhāgavata-tātparya-

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bhārata-tātparya-brahma-sūtra-bhāṣya-adibhyaḥ saṅgṛhītāni. taiś caivam uktaṁ bhārata-tātparye–

śāstrāntarāṇi saṁjānan
vedāntasya prasādataḥ
deśe deśe tathā granthān
dṛṣṭvā caiva pṛthag-vidhān

yathā sa bhagavān vyāsaḥ
sākṣān nārāyaṇaḥ prabhuḥ
jagād bhāratādyeṣu tathā
vakṣye tad-īkṣayā. iti

tatra tad-uddhṛtā śrūtiḥ—catur-veda-śikhādyā; purāṇañca—gāruḍādīnāṁ samprati sarvatrāpracarad-rūpam aṁśādikaṁ; saṁhitā ca—mahā-saṁhitādikāḥ; tantrañca—tantra-bhāgavatādikaṁ brahma-tarkādikam iti jñeyam.

In the Ṣaṭ-sandharbhas, I (Jīva Gosvāmī) have quoted various authentic scriptural statements as evidence. This is to establish the authenticity of my own interpretation or opinion, which I have expressed in this literature. It is not to try to prove the authenticity of the statements or conclusions of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. *Bhāgavatam*, like the Vedas, is self-evident (*svataḥ-pramāṇa*) and therefore does not depend upon any second evidence. In the Sandarbhas, I have quoted various statements of evidence from the original texts of Śruti, Smṛti, the Purāṇas and so on, exactly as I have personally seen them in those literatures. Besides that, my predecessor *ācāryas* from among the *tattva-vāda guru-varga* have cited evidence which I, the author of *Tattva-sandarbha* (*tattva-vādī*), have also quoted, although there are several of the original texts which I have not seen personally. These *tattva-vādī* predecessor *gurus* such as Śrī Mādhavendra Purī have accepted the discipleship of Śrī Śaṅkara Ācārya by accepting *sannyāsa* from *ācāryas* in the Śaṅkara *sampradāya*. Nonetheless, because of their strong inclination to Bhagavān, they remained completely aloof from Śaṅkara's doctrines. They broadly promulgated Vaiṣṇava conceptions, which contain various specialities from the conclusions of the *ācāryas*. The disciples and grand-disciples of the renowned Ānanda Tīrtha, such as Vijayadhvaja, Brahmaṇya Tīrtha and Vyāsa Tīrtha, have collected evidence from literatures such as *Bhāgavata-tātparya*, *Bhārata-tātparya* and *Aṇu-bhāṣya*, which were composed by Śrīman Madhva Ācārya, the best of those who know the Vedas and their inner purport.

In his *Bhārata-tātparya*, Śrīman Madhva Ācārya has also written, "By the grace of Vedānta and the Upaniṣads, I will establish the *siddhānta*, since I know the confidential mystery of various other *śāstras*. I have investigated varieties of literatures from different countries and I honour the conclusions expressed in texts such as the *Mahābhārata*, written by the direct manifestation of Nārāyaṇa, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vedavyāsa.

I am writing *Tattva-sandarbha* following Śrīman Madhva Ācārya's words. I am accepting statements quoted by him and those in his line, without having personally seen the originals of many of the texts, which are not widely broadcast these days, such as *Caturveda-śikhā* and other Śrutis, the *Garuḍa Purāṇa* and other Purāṇas. This includes the Saṁhitās like the *Mahā-saṁhitā* and Tantras such as *Tantra-bhāgavata* and *Brahma-tarka*.

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This evidence clearly proves that Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī has indeed accepted Śrīman Madhva Ācārya as the predecessor *ācārya* of the Śrī Gauḍīya *sampradāya*. Nowhere does Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī make such a clear statement in regard to Śrī Rāmānuja Ācārya or Śrīdhara Svāmīpāda. Specifically he has not accepted all the conclusions of the disciples and grand-disciples of any *sampradāya ācārya* other than Madhva. Śrī Rāmānujācārya had many disciples and grand-disciples, and Śrīdhara Svāmī also had many disciples, but Jīva Gosvāmī has not recorded their names anywhere. What to speak of mentioning Nimbārka Ācārya's name, we cannot find even a scent of his existence anywhere in Jīva Gosvāmī's writings.

Objection 4: Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī has described the glories of Śrīman Mahāprabhu in a verse in the invocation (*maṅgalācaraṇa*) of his *Sarva-saṁvādinī*. Praying to Mahāprabhu, he has described Him as *sva-sampradāya-sahasrādhidaiva*, the eternal presiding deity of thousands upon thousands of *sampradāyas* established by Him. How, then, can He be included within any other *sampradāya*? He is personally the founder of the independent Gauḍīya *sampradāya*.

Refutation: This objection is quite ridiculous. The complete verse from the *maṅgalācaraṇa* of *Sarva-saṁvādinī* reads as follows: "*durlabha-prema-pīyūṣa-maya-gaṅgā-pravāha-sahasraṁ sva-sampradāya-sahasrādhidaivaṁ śrī-śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanyadeva-nāmānaṁ śrī-bhagavantam* – I offer my obeiscences to Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanyadeva, the Supreme Lord. He enabled the flow of that most rare nectar of *prema* for Śrī Kṛṣṇa to flow in hundreds and thousands of streams, by becoming the presiding deity of His own chosen *sampradāya*."

Śrī Sundarānanda Vidyāvinoda and other antagonists have interpreted *sva-sampradāya-sahasrādhidaivam* in this verse to mean 'the presiding deity of thousands of *sampradāyas* which Śrīman Mahāprabhu has personally inaugurated'. The salient point here is that Śrīman Mahāprabhu has not founded thousands of *sampradāyas*; He has established only one, which is called the Śrī Madhva-Gauḍīya-Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya*. Therefore their interpretation is completely erroneous.

Śrī Rasika-mohana Vidyābhūṣaṇa Mahodaya has interpreted *sva-sampradāya-sahasrādhidaiva* in another way, as 'the supreme presiding deity of His own chosen *sampradāya*'. This meaning is quite appropriate, and all Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas have accepted it. One may say, "Śrīman Mahāprabhu is Svayam Bhagavān, and is directly Śrī Kṛṣṇacandra. Is it necessary for Svayam Bhagavān Gauracandra to consider any other personality as His *guru* and accept *dīkṣā* and *śikṣā* from him?" The answer is, "Yes, it is necessary when Śrī Bhagavān performs His human-like pastimes (*nara-līlā*)." Śrī Rāmacandra has exhibited the pastime of accepting *dīkṣā* and *śikṣā* from Vaśiṣṭha Muni, Śrī Kṛṣṇa from Sāndīpani Muni, and Śrīman Mahāprabhu from Īśvara Purī. These activities do not affect Their *bhagavattā*, quality of being Bhagavān, even in the slightest way. Svayam Bhagavān performs such pastimes in order to give instructions to the world. There is no question of Śrīman Mahāprabhu's *bhagavattā*, or *tattva*, being lost if He is included in any *sampradāya*.

It is not the personal duty of Bhagavān to establish a *sampradāya*; His devotees do that. History shows that in all cases only *viṣṇu-śakti* or the servants of Viṣṇu have ever founded a *sampradāya*. Granted, Śrī Bhagavān is the original,

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eternal personality of *sanātana-dharma*, which He Himself establishes, as is evident in scriptural statements such as *dharmaṁ tu sākṣād bhagavat-praṇītam* (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 6.3.19) and *dharmo jagannāthaḥ sākṣāt nārāyaṇāḥ*. Still, the statement *akartā caiva kartā ca kāryaṁ kāraṇam eva ca* (*Mahābhārata*, *Śānti-parva* 348.60) shows that Bhagavān has no direct engagement in the business of establishing a *sampradāya*. Rather, He accomplishes this task through His empowered representatives. If this were not so, then instead of the Brahmā, Rudra, Sanaka and Śrī *sampradāyas*, there would be the Vāsudeva, Saṅkarṣaṇa and Nārāyaṇa *sampradāyas*.

Objection 5: While touring in South India, Śrīman Mahāprabhu went to Uḍūpī. There He had a discussion with a *tattva-vādī ācārya* who was in Śrī Madhva Ācārya's *sampradāya*. Mahāprabhu refuted the views of the *tattva-vādīs*, so He can never be included in that *sampradāya*.

Refutation: Śrīman Mahāprabhu did not directly refute Madhva Ācārya's ideas about *śuddha-bhakti*. Rather, He refuted the distorted opinions of the *tattva-vādīs* which had entered into the Madhva *sampradāya* in the course of time. Readers can understand this simply by looking in this section of *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Madhya-līlā* 9.276–277):

> *prabhu kahe,—"karmī, jñānī,—dui bhakti-hīna*
> *tomāra sampradāye dekhi sei dui cihna*
>
> *sabe, eka guṇa dekhi tomāra sampradāye*
> *'satya-vigraha īśvare', karaha niścaye"*
>
> The Lord said: Fruitive workers (*karmīs*) and speculative philosophers (*jñānīs*) are devoid of devotion, and it is seen that both of these are respected in your *sampradāya*. Still, in your *sampradāya* there is one very great quality – the deity form of Bhagavān has been accepted. Not only this, but the deity has also been accepted as Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself. He is worshipped in your *sampradāya* in the form of the dancing Gopāla.

This proves that Śrīman Mahāprabhu refuted the distortions that later entered the Madhva *sampradāya* in the course of time. He did not refute Madhva Ācārya's opinions on *śuddha-bhakti* or the fundamental philosophical conclusions that he expressed in his commentaries. On the contrary, we have already shown that literatures such as *Tattva-sandarbha* and *Sarva-saṁvādinī* have been based on the conclusions of Śrī Madhva and his disciples and grand-disciples. In this connection we should point out that a difference of *sampradāya* does not generally arise from some minor difference of opinion. Rather, the difference between *sampradāyas* comes from the differences in doctrine regarding the principal object of worship.

Objection 6: Some people criticize Madhva Ācārya's doctrine, saying that it includes the following specific points: (a) liberation is only attained by *brāhmaṇas* who have taken birth in a *brāhmaṇa* dynasty; (b) among devotees, the demigods are prominent; (c) only Brahmā merges with Viṣṇu; (d) Lakṣmījī is in the category of *jīva*; and (e) the *gopīs* are in the category of the *apsarās* of Svarga, the heavenly damsels. However, in the opinion of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and the Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* in His line, these conceptions of Madhva are contradictory to the conclusions of *śuddha-bhakti*. Under such circumstances, why would Śrī Caitanyadeva accept the Madhva *sampradāya*? That being the case, how can the

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ācāryas following in His Gauḍīya *sampradāya* be included within the Madhva *sampradāya*?

Refutation: When Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa was in Galtā-gaddī in Jaipura, he used scriptural evidence and infallible logic to break to pieces all these arguments of the opposition party. He quoted the conclusions of Madhva Ācārya as well as those of his disciples and grand-disciples, such as Vijayadhvaja, Brahmaṇya Tīrtha and Vyāsa Tīrtha. Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa has refuted all such accusations in his books, such as his commentary on *Tattva-sandarbha*, his *Govinda-bhāṣya*, *Siddhānta-ratnam* and *Prameya-ratnāvalī*, and he has proved that the Śrī Gauḍīya *sampradāya* is included within the Madhva *sampradāya*.

In the Galtā-gaddī assembly, Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa proved that Śrī Madhva considered Laksmījī to be the dear consort of Viṣṇu. Śrī Madhva taught that her spiritual body is composed of knowledge and pleasure and, like Viṣṇu, she is also completely free from defects, such as the misery of being confined in the womb prior to birth. She is all-pervading, and she also enjoys in unlimited forms along with the unlimited forms of Śrī Viṣṇu. When the *avatāra* of Viṣṇu descends, Lakṣmī also descends and reigns in the form of that *avatāra's* dear beloved consort. Like Viṣṇu, Lakṣmī also has various names and forms (Śrī Madhva's *Bṛhad-āranyaka-bhāṣya* 3.5).

Furthermore, Lakṣmī-devī is Viṣṇu's subservient embodiment of all knowledge. She is also superior to and more qualified than Catur-mukha Brahmā. She resides on the limbs of Bhagavān in the form of various types of ornaments, and it is she who manifests all facilities for the pleasure of Viṣṇu, such as His bed, seat, throne, ornaments and so on. (Śrī Madhva Ācārya's explanation of *Brahma-sūtra* 4.2.1, supported by *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.9.13)

Nowhere has Śrī Madhva described Śrī Lakṣmī to be in the category of *jīva*. Similarly, the ideas that only *brāhmaṇas* attain liberation, that the demigods are the prominent devotees, that only Brahmā merges with Viṣṇu and so on, are all foreign to the Madhva *sampradāya*.

On this subject, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has explained in his *Śrīman Mahāprabhu kī Śikṣā* why Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu accepted the Madhva *sampradāya*: "Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī, having determined the authenticity of the Vedic scriptures, has also ascertained the authenticity of the Purāṇas. Ultimately he has proved that *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the crest jewel of all evidence. He has shown that the same characteristic qualities that qualify *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* as the topmost evidence also apply to the scriptures endorsed by Brahmā, Nārada, Vyāsa and Śukadeva, and after them, in sequence, Vijayadhvaja, Brahmaṇya Tīrtha, Vyāsa Tīrtha and their *tattva-guru*, Śrī Madhva Ācārya. These scriptures, then, are also in the category of authentic literatures.

"It is evident from this that the Brahma-Madhva *sampradāya* is the *guru-praṇālī*, or *guru-paramparā*, of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas who have taken shelter of Śrīman Mahāprabhu. Kavi Karṇapūra confirmed this same idea in his delineation of the *guru-paramparā* in his *Gaura-ganoddeśa-dīpikā*. The commentator of *Vedānta-sūtra*, Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, has also accepted this same succession. There is no doubt at all that those who do not accept this succession are prominent enemies of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas who are following in His footsteps.

"The doctrine of *bhedābheda* or *dvaitādvaita*, which Nimbāditya propounded, is incomplete. In accepting the teachings of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu the Vaiṣṇava world has attained

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the complete perfection of the doctrine of *bhedābheda*. The principal foundation-stone of the philosophy of *acintya-bhedābheda* is *sac-cid-ānanda vigraha*, and it is because Śrī Madhva Ācārya has accepted the *sac-cid-ānanda vigraha* that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu accepted the Śrī Madhva *sampradāya*.

"There is a technical difference between the philosophical ideas propagated by the previous Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas*, because they are slightly incomplete. This technical difference marks the difference in *sampradāya*. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who is directly the Supreme Truth, has, by the power of His omniscience, completed and made flawless those conceptions that were suffering from some deficiency – Madhva Ācārya's philosophical conclusion regarding the Lord as the concentrated essence and embodiment of eternality, knowledge and bliss (*sac-cid-ānanda nitya-vigraha*), Rāmānuja Ācārya's conclusion regarding the Lord's potency (*śakti-siddhānta*), Viṣṇu Svāmī's philosophy of purified non-dualism (*śuddhādvaita siddhānta*) and the sentiment of exclusive dependence on Kṛṣṇa (*tadīya sarvasvatva*), and Nimbāditya's philosophy of simultaneous dualism and non-dualism between the Lord and the living entity (*nitya dvaitādvaita siddhānta*) – and has given His own thoroughly pure and realized doctrine of inconceivable, simultaneous separateness and oneness (*acintya-bhedābheda*), thus showing compassion to the world."

Another reason for Śrīman Mahāprabhu's acceptance of Madhva's conception is that Śrī Madhva's doctrine distinctly refutes *māyāvāda*, or *kevalādvaita-vāda*, which is opposed to *bhakti-tattva* in all respects. A third point is that Śrī Madhva Ācārya manifested and worshipped Nanda-nandana, the dancing Gopāla, in Uḍūpī. When Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu had *darśana* of the deity, He became overwhelmed in ecstatic love and began to dance. He had not seen such a deity anywhere else during his tour of South India. This is also powerful evidence for His being in Śrī Madhva's line.

In his *Śrī Kṛṣṇa-vijaya*, Śrī Guṇarāja Khān wrote the line, "*nanda-nandana kṛṣṇa—mora prāṇanātha* – Nanda-nandana Kṛṣṇa is the Lord of my life" (quoted in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā* 15.100), and for this utterance, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu sold Himself forever into the hands of Śrī Guṇarāja Khān's descendants. Why, then, would He not sell Himself to the *paramparā* of those disciples and grand-disciples for whom Nanda-nandana Nṛtya-Gopāla is their most worshipful Lord? This is also specific evidence that the Gauḍīya *sampradāya* is in the line of Madhva.

Although there is some slight difference of opinion between Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas and Śrī Madhva in regard to *brahma, jīva* and *jagat*, this simple difference of opinion is not the cause of a difference of *sampradāya*. The difference between Vaiṣṇava *sampradāyas* has been created on the basis of a difference in the object of worship (*upāsya-tattva*), or on the basis of gradations of excellence in aspects of *para-tattva*. Even if there is some slight difference in regard to *sādhya-*, *sādhana-* and *sādhaka-tattva*, this is rarely considered to be the cause of a difference of *sampradāya*. Actually, the main cause of distinct *sampradāyas* is the difference in realization of *para-tattva* or *upāsya-tattva*. This was why Śrīman Mahāprabhu overlooked the philosophical differences with the *tattva-vādīs* and, focusing on their worship of *para-tattva* dancing Gopāla, accepted Śrī Madhva Ācārya as the prominent *sampradāya ācārya*.

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Objection 7: Some persons who are ignorant of *sampradāya-tattva* say, "Śrī Mādhavendra Purī and Īśvara Purī cannot be *sannyāsīs* in the Madhva *sampradāya* because they are designated by the name 'Purī', whereas *sannyāsīs* in the Madhva *sampradāya* are called 'Tīrtha'. If Śrī Mādhavendra Purī is not included in the Madhva *sampradāya*, then there are no grounds for claiming that Śrīman Mahāprabhu has accepted the Madhva *sampradāya*."

Refutation: Śrī Mādhavendra Purīpāda's title 'Purī' is his *sannyāsa* name. Actually, he was the initiated disciple of Lakṣmīpati Tīrtha, who was in the Śrī Madhva *sampradāya*. Śrī Mādhavendra Purīpāda later accepted *sannyāsa* from a *sannyāsī* bearing the name 'Purī', just as Śrīman Mahāprabhu first accepted *dīkṣā* from Śrī Īśvara Purī and later manifested the pastime of accepting *sannyāsa* from Śrī Keśava Bhāratī. There is no rule stating that the *dīkṣā-guru* and *sannyāsa-guru* have to be the same person. In some cases they may be and in others not. Śrī Madhva Ācārya himself was first initiated into a Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya* by the *viṣṇu-mantra*, and after that he accepted *sannyāsa* dress from an *advaita-vādī*, Acyutaprekṣa. After some days, Śrī Madhva Ācārya influenced Acyutaprekṣa and brought him into the Vaiṣṇava conception. Even after taking *sannyāsa* from an *advaita-vādī*, Śrī Madhva Ācārya did not accept *advaita-vāda*. On the contrary, he powerfully refuted all the ideas of *advaita-vāda* and, having established *tattva-vāda*, he preached and spread it everywhere. The same is also seen in the life of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

It is true that *sannyāsīs* in the Madhva *sampradāya* are called 'Tīrtha', but 'Tīrtha' is not the title of *gṛhastha* Vaiṣṇavas or *brahmacārīs* in that *sampradāya*. Since Śrī Mādhavendra Purī did not have the title 'Tīrtha' before taking *sannyāsa*, when he accepted the dress of the renounced order from a *sannyāsī* in the *advaita-sampradāya*, his title had to be 'Purī'. This is not illogical.

Objection 8: Some say that the goal (*sādhya*) and the practice (*sādhana*) of the Śrī Madhva *sampradāya* differ from that of the Śrī Gauḍīya *sampradāya*. Therefore, the Śrī Gauḍīya *sampradāya* cannot be considered to be within the Śrī Madhva *sampradāya*.

Refutation: This objection is thoroughly false and rooted in ignorance. Śrī Madhva's doctrine acknowledges *bhagavad-bhakti* as the *sādhana* in all respects. As with Śrī Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, the initial *sādhana* prescribed for *kaniṣṭha-adhikārī sādhakas*, neophyte practitioners, is to offer the results of ones' fruitive activities to Kṛṣṇa. However, *bhagavat-parama-prasāda sādhana*, i.e., *śuddha-bhakti*, has been established as the principal practice.

Śrī Madhva Ācārya has established *bhakti*, as we see in his commentary on *Vedānta-sūtra* (3.3.53) where he quotes from *Māṭhara-śruti*: "*bhaktir evainaṁ nayati bhaktir evainaṁ darśayati / bhakti-vaśaḥ puruṣo bhaktir eva bhūyasī* – It is only unalloyed *bhagavad-bhakti* that carries the *jīvas* to Bhagavān and brings about an audience with Him and eternal engagement in service to Him. Bhagavān is only controlled by *bhakti*." In the commentary of *sūtra* 3.3.45 he writes, "*varāhe ca—guru-prasādo balavān na tasmād balavattaram / tathāpi śravaṇādiś ca kartavyo mokṣa-siddhaye* – The mercy of *śrī gurudeva* is more powerful than anything else for attaining the perfection of liberation in the form of service to Viṣṇu's lotus

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feet. Yet it is still necessary to engage in the limbs of *sādhana-bhakti* such as *śravaṇa* and *kīrtana*." In his *Mahābhārata-tātparya-nirṇaya*[1], the position of *bhakti* is seen throughout: "*sneho bhaktir iti proktaḥ tayā muktir na cānyathā* – liberation is obtained only through loving devotion, and not otherwise" (1.85) and "*bhaktyaiva tuṣyati hari-pravaṇa tvam eva* – one can please Hari only by devotion" (2.55). We have not given more evidence simply because of lack of space.

In the Madhva *sampradāya*, love of Bhagavān is the only goal. Although in some places Śrīman Madhva Ācārya has accepted *mokṣa*, or liberation, as the goal. His definition of *mokṣa* is "*viṣṇavāṅghri lābhaḥ mukti* – liberation is the attainment of service to the lotus feet of Viṣṇu." Thus, the Śrī Madhva *sampradāya* accepts the definition of *mukti* presented in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (2.10.6): "*muktir hitvānyathā rūpaṁ svarūpeṇa vyavasthitiḥ* – The *jīva* carries the conception of 'I' and 'mine' arising from the gross and subtle designations, which are accomplished by the action of *māyā*. *Mukti* means to be released from this false identity and to be established in rendering loving service to Bhagavān in one's pure constitutional form."

Madhva Ācārya's *mukti* is not *sāyujya-mukti*, or merging with *brahma*, which Śaṅkarācārya speaks about. Rather, it is based on love of Bhagavān. Nowhere has he accepted *sāyujya* in the form of the oneness of *brahma* and *jīva*. On the contrary, he has refuted it in every way. Śrī Madhva is well-known as *bheda-vādī* because he accepts that the *jīva* and *brahma* are different both in the stage of bondage and in the stage of liberation – *abhedaḥ sarva-rūpeṣu jīvabhedaḥ sadaiva hi*.

1 Editor: Śrīman Madhva Ācārya's commentary on *Mahābhārata*

Although Śrīman Madhva emphasizes *bheda* (difference), he does not at all disregard the Śrutis which indicate *abheda* (non-difference); instead he has accepted their compatibility. In other words, we find a hint of the acceptance of *acintya-bhedābheda*, as Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī has suggested in his Sandharbhas. According to Vedānta, "*śakti-śaktimator abhedaḥ* – the potency and the potent are non-different." An indication of *acintya-bhedābheda* is found in a statement from *Brahma-tarka* which Śrī Madhva supported:

viśeṣasya viśiṣtasyāpy
abhedas tadvad eva tu
sarvaṁ cācintya-śaktitvād
yujyate parameśvare

tac chaktyaiva tu jīveṣu
cid-rūpa-prakṛtāvāpi
bhedābhedau tad-anyatra
hyubhayor api darśanāt

Thus there is no particular difference between Madhva Ācārya and Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu regarding *sādhya* and *sādhana*. Whatever slight differences are evident are details only.

The Madhva and Gauḍīya *sampradāyas* bear a distinct similarity. The *sannyāsīs* presiding over the eight *maṭhas* of the *tattva-vādīs* in Uḍūpī perform *bhajana* in the mood of the *gopīs* under the guidance of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's eight beloved *nāyikās*, or heroines, in Vraja. On this subject, Śrī Padmanābhacārī, the author of Śrī Madhva Ācārya's biography, has written:

"The monks who take charge of Sri Krishna by rotation, are so many gopees of Brindavan, who moved with and loved Sri Krishna with an indescribable intensity of feeling, and are taking rebirths now for the privilege of worshipping Him" (*Life and Teachings of Sri Madhvacharya* by C. M. Padmanabhachar, Chapter XII, page 145).

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Even today, the service of Yaśodā-nandana dancing Gopāla continues in the main *maṭha* in Uḍūpī. Śrīla Madhva Ācārya has praised his worshipful dancing Gopāla Śrī Kṛṣṇa in this way in the fifth verse, Chapter Six of his *Dvādaśa-stotram*:

devaki-nandana nanda-kumāra
vṛndāvanāñjana gokula-candra
kandaphalāśana sundara-rūpa
nandita-gokula vanditapāda

The son of Devakī and Nanda, whose lotus feet are worshipful, is the ornament of Vṛndāvana, and the moon of Gokula. Possessed of exquisite beauty, He delights the residents of Vraja and He eats the roots of the forest as He wanders about.

Similarly, in the Śrī Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya*, service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, under the guidance of the *gopīs*, has been ascertained as the ultimate goal, or *sādhya*, in the writings of Śrīla Rūpa, Sanātana, Raghunātha, Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmīs and others.

In this way, by evaluating the opinions of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* from first to last, one can conclude that the Śrī Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya* is included within the Śrī Madhva *sampradāya* and that this is consistent with reason in all respects.

Objection 9: The Madhva *sampradāya* is *bheda-vādī*, whereas the Gauḍīya *sampradāya* is *acintya-bhedābheda-vādī*. Therefore, there is a vast difference of opinion between them.

Refutation: We have said previously that although the Madhva *sampradāya* accepts five kinds of difference, or *bheda*, between *brahma*, *jīva* and *jagat*, still there is a hint of *acintya-bhedābheda-vāda* in their teachings. The Vedic scriptures give evidence for both *bheda* and *abheda* in relation to *brahma*, the individual soul (*jīva*) and the material world (*jagat*). However, although there is both *bheda* and *abheda*, we only have experience of difference, not non-difference. In the field of *bhakti*, the difference (*bheda*) between *upāsya*, the object of worship, and *upāsaka*, the worshipper, is the backbone of worship, and this *bheda* is proved both in the stage of practice and the stage of perfection. Otherwise, if there were no difference between the worshipper and the object of worship, then worship would not be possible. Thus, although there may be some dissimilarities between the Śrī Gauḍīya and Madhva *sampradāyas*, this can not be the cause of a difference in *sampradāya*. The object of worship is Bhagavān, the method of worship is *bhakti*, and the objective is *mokṣa* in the form of *bhagavat-sevā*. Vaiṣṇavas of the four Vaiṣṇava *sampradāyas* hold slightly different opinions in regard to these *tattvas*, but we cannot say that they are fundamentally different. They are all adherents to the same religious principles.

The difference between Vaiṣṇava *sampradāyas* has been created only on the basis of difference in their worshipful deity, or a difference of excellence in regard to the ultimate Reality, *para-tattva*. Though there may even exist divergences in *sādhya-*, *sādhana-* and *sādhaka-tattva*, this is rarely considered a difference in *sampradāya*. Actually, the principal cause of differences between *sampradāyas* is diversity in realization of the ultimate Reality (*para-tattva*), or the worshipful deity (*upāsya-tattva*). The worshipful deity is determined by the degree of excellence exhibited.

Śrī Murāri Gupta is one of Mahāprabhu's confidential associates and he is described in the Gauḍīya *sampradāya* as an incarnation

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of Hanumān. Although Śrīman Mahāprabhu explained to him that Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa has more *mādhurya*, or sweetness, than Bhagavān Śrī Rāmacandra, Murāri Gupta was not attracted to worshipping Kṛṣṇa. His worshipful Lord was Rāma, and he continued being devoted to Śrī Rāma until the very end. Śrīman Mahāprabhu was most pleased to see his unmovable dedication.

Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita is also one of the principal associates of Mahāprabhu. His worshipful deity is Śrī Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa, and Śrī Karṇapūra considered him to be an incarnation of Śrī Nārada. It is well-known that he personally preferred the worship of Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa to Mahāprabhu's *unnata-ujjvala-rasa*, the most elevated relationship of divine amorous love.

Some ignorant and misguided persons say that there is a difference of opinion between Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī and Jīva Gosvāmī because Śrī Jīva did not accept the former's explanation of the *parakīya-rasa* (paramour love) of the *vraja-gopīs* and instead supported *svakīya-rasa* (married love). Therefore, they say that there is a disagreement in the philosophy of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī and Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī. But this accusation is completely unfounded and incorrect. The truth is that Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī supported *svakīya-vāda* for the benefit of some of his followers who had taste for *svakīya-rasa*. His internal consideration was that unqualified persons entering into the transcendentally wonderful *parakīya vraja-rasa* should not fall into any adulterous behaviour. It is offensive to consider Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī an opponent of the transcendental *vraja-rasa*, and he is not considered to be outside the Gauḍīya *sampradāya* on account of this simple [apparent] divergence of views.

We also see differences of opinion among the *ācāryas* of the *māyāvādī*, or *kevalādvaita-vādī*, *sampradāya*. The *māyāvādīs* themselves accept that these inherent contrarieties exist. However, they are all within the *advaita-vādī* Śaṅkara *sampradāya*. Some believe in *vivarta-vāda*, some believe in *bimba-pratibimba-vāda*, some have accepted *avicchinna-vāda*, some admit *ābhāsa-vāda*, and they have refuted each others' opinions. Even so, they are included within the same *sampradāya*.

Similarly, although there are some slight mutual differences of opinion between the Śrī Madhva and the Śrī Gauḍīya *sampradāya*, it is thoroughly appropriate to accept that the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya* follows Madhva Ācārya.

Refutation of the doctrines of the smārta opponents of bhakti

Ācārya kesarī Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī refuted the doctrines of the *smārtas*, who are bereft of devotion, while he was preaching *śuddha-bhakti* in vast religious assemblies in West Bengal's Medinīpura, Caubīsa Paraganā, Barddhamān, Kūcabihāra, Māthābhāṅgā and also in Assam. I [the author] am presenting herein whatever ideas I recorded from those speeches in my notebook.

Smārtas are those who know and follow the *smṛti-śāstras*, or scriptures of prescribed regulations manifested by four-headed Brahmā, Nārada, Vyāsa, Manu, Yājñavalkya and others, for executing the practical duties of life. There are two kinds of *smṛti-śāstra*: *laukika*, worldly, and *pāramārthika*, transcendental. *Pāramārthika-smṛtis* are those *smṛti-śāstras* which support the regulations of the principal subject, namely,

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bhagavad-bhakti, which is established in the Vedas, Upaniṣads, Purāṇas, *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyaṇa*. *Laukika smṛti-śāstras* neglect the confidential purport of the scriptures and only prescribe regulations for protecting the gross social shackles.

Fundamentally, Smṛti is one. In course of time, it was divided because of the distinction between *ṛṣis* and *munis* who were inclined towards the service of Bhagavān (*bhagavat-unmukha*) and those who were averse to Bhagavān (*bhagavat-vimukha*). Those very rare people who have regard for the statements of *pāramārthika-smṛti* are called *śuddha-smārtas*, or Vaiṣṇavas. The majority of people in this world are averse to Hari and maintain the conception that the gross body is the self. Those who honour the statements of *laukika-smṛti*, which are geared to benefitting the body and mind, are known as *smārtas*. They forget Bhagavān and perform various types of activities only for their own enjoyment, with the understanding, 'I (the *ātmā*) am the gross and subtle body'. Various kinds of laws have been given in the Smṛti in order to instruct those *jīvas* who are not surrendered to Bhagavān or under the guidance of His devotees, and who are dedicated to their bodies. Such people are always absorbed in mundane activities, and in order to fulfil their selfish interests, they are perpetually engaged in inappropriate behaviour such as telling lies, cheating others, stealing and perpetrating violence. To curb their base pursuits, *smṛti-śāstras* has given many strict injunctions, which do not pertain to the *jīva's* eternal nature (*nitya-dharma*). These regulations have been presented in relation to some particular circumstance (*naimittika-dharma*).

In contrast, all activities in relation to Bhagavān are eternal, because Bhagavān is the enjoyer of the fruit of all activities. All such activities are performed with the aim and object of pleasing Bhagavān, and will continue to be performed in the future and for time eternal. The worldly *smṛti-śāstra* mentions duties such as *dāya-bhāga* (sharing inheritance), *saṁskāras* (rites for purification), *śuddhi-nirṇaya* (arbitrations and judgements), *prāyaścitta* (purificatory activities for penance and atonement) and *śrāddha* (making offerings to the ancestors). These are only relevant for the duration of one's human life; and it is the worshipper, not Bhagavān, who is the enjoyer of these activities. These *laukika smṛti-śāstras* do not mention any regulations for the spiritual welfare of the *jīvas*. Their *vratas*, such as the Durgā festival and Ekādaśī, and their *śrāddha*, *saṁskāras*, etc., are all for material enjoyment and liberation, and are therefore circumstantial.

Unlike the *smārtas*, Vaiṣṇavas are surrendered to Bhagavān. The purpose of all their activities is *bhagavat-sevā*, and therefore they are non-envious and unwavering. They give respect to all *jīvas*, because they understand that the living entity is the servant of Bhagavān. There is not the slightest desire in their hearts to become great personalities in this world, to make others insignificant, or to acquire prestige in this life and the heavenly planets in the next, by performing sacrifice, meditation, austerity, *japa*, *śrāddha* and *tarpaṇa* (offerings of foodstuffs and water to forefathers and demigods), pilgrimages to holy places and giving offerings for the worship of the demigods. They do not even have the expectation of attaining deliverance from the cycle of birth and death and becoming liberated. If the service of their worshipful Lord may be attained by taking millions of births, and even by taking up residence in hell, then that is the object of their prayers. Their pleasure lies only in the pleasure of Bhagavān.

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Even great *ṛṣis* and *munis* do not know the glories of pure devotees and pure *bhakti*.

In the Sixth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, we hear of a debate that took place in ancient times between Vaiṣṇavas (the associates of Viṣṇu) and *smārtas* (the Yamadūtas) concerning Ajāmila. Yamarāja told the Yamadūtas, "What to speak of others, even Jaiminī, Manu and other prominent *karma-kāṇḍa ṛṣis* and *munis* do not realize the glories of the devotees of the Supreme Lord within their hearts, because their intelligence is enchanted by the sweet, flowery statements of the three Vedas. Their power of discrimination is bewildered by *daivī-māyā*, the illusory potency of the Lord. Therefore, they praise the ostentatious and costly activities mentioned in Smṛti."

"*Kāmukāḥ paśyanti kāminī-mayaṁ jagat* – sensual persons see the world as being full of amorous women." In accordance with this logic, and coupled with their conception of 'I' and 'mine' in relation to the material body, *smārtas* even attribute various types of defects to the devotional endeavours of pure devotees. They consider the foot-bathing water of Viṣṇu and Vaiṣṇavas to be ordinary water. They think that Śrī Nārāyaṇa (Śrī Śālagrāma) can be contaminated by the touch of a *śūdra* and can then be purified and again made suitable for worship by performing rituals with *pañca-gavya*, five pure products from a cow. In other words, they have the base conception that even in the direct form of Bhagavān, a defect can arise as a result of being touched, and that Bhagavān can be made pure by cow dung and so on.

In addition to this, *smārtas* consider Vaiṣṇavas to belong to a mundane caste or creed. They consider *bhagavat-prasāda* to be ordinary lentils and rice that can become contaminated. They think that even the caste of *guru* and Bhagavān is destroyed by accepting or offering to Bhagavān grains that have been cooked by a non-*brāhmaṇa* disciple. They consider *bhagavad-bhakti* to consist of activities such as accepting only rice from uncooked paddy, taking bath three times a day and wearing a silk *dhoti*. Furthermore, they understand Vaiṣṇavas to be ordinary living entities bound by their *karma*. They worship various demigods and their consorts; they think that *dharma* is subservient to society; and they have great respect for a society that is opposed to Bhagavān. This is their misfortune.

In the *Garuḍa Purāṇa*, the glories of the devotees of Viṣṇu have been described:

brāhmaṇānāṁ sahasrebhyaḥ
satrayājī viśiṣyate
satrayāji-sahasrebhyaḥ
sarva-vedānta pāragaḥ

sarva-vedānta-vit-koṭyā
viṣṇu-bhakto viśiṣyate
vaiṣṇavānāṁ sahasrebhyaḥ
ekāntyeko viśiṣyate

One sacrificial priest is superior to one thousand *brāhmaṇas*, one scholar of all Vedānta is better than one thousand sacrificial priests, one devotee of Viṣṇu is superior to millions of Vedāntic scholars, and one unalloyed devotee is superior to thousands of Vaiṣṇavas.

aho bata śva-paco 'to garīyān
yaj-jihvāgre vartate nāma tubhyam
tepus tapas te juhuvuḥ sasnur āryā
brahmānūcur nāma gṛṇanti ye te

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (3.33.7)

Oh, what more can I say about the superiority of those persons who chant the holy name? Those on whose tongues

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Your name is manifest are the best of all, even though they may have appeared in a family of outcastes. Their brahminical qualifications have already been perfected in many past births, because those topmost persons who utter Your name have already observed all brahminical activities, such as austerity, ceremonial sacrifices, bathing in the holy places, perfecting virtuous conduct and studying the Vedas.

na me priyaś caturvedī
mad-bhaktaḥ śvapacaḥ priyaḥ
tasmai deyaṁ tato grāhyaṁ
sa ca pūjyo yathā hyaham

Hari-bhakti-vilāsa (10.91)

The *catur-vedī brāhmaṇa* who is learned in all four Vedas but bereft of *bhakti* is not dear to Me, but My devotee is extremely dear to Me, even though he may have taken birth in a family of outcastes. He is a worthy recipient of charity, and his mercy should be accepted. He is certainly as worshipful as I am.

bhagavad-bhakti-hīnasya jātiḥ
śāstraṁ japas-tapaḥ
aprāṇasyeva dehasya
maṇḍanaṁ loka-rañjanaṁ

suciḥ sad-bhakti-dīptāgni-
dagdha-durjāti-kalmaṣaḥ
śvapāko 'pi budhaiḥ ślāghyo
na vedāḍhyo 'pi nāstikaḥ

Hari-bhakti-sudhodaya (3.11–12)

Those who are of good character and whose sins have already been destroyed by the blazing fire of genuine *bhakti* are to be honoured by highly learned scholars, though they may be outcastes by birth. On the other hand, one may be a scholar of the Vedas, but if he is an atheist, he is not worthy of respect. The high birth, scriptural learning, utterance of *mantras* and austerities of a person who is devoid of *bhakti* are like the decorations on a dead body; they are of no use. Such external practices are only for the sake of charming common people.

viṣṇu-bhakti-vihīnā ye
caṇḍālāḥ parikīrtitāḥ
caṇḍālā api te śreṣṭhā
hari-bhakti-parāyaṇāḥ

Bṛhan-nāradīya Purāṇa,
quoted in *Bhakti-sandarbha* (*Anuccheda* 100)

Persons devoid of *viṣṇu-bhakti* are outcastes. In contrast, those who are dedicated to *bhagavad-bhakti* are the greatest personalities, even though they may have appeared in outcaste families.

śvapaco 'pi mahīpāla
viṣṇorbhakto dvijādhikaḥ
viṣṇu-bhakti vihīno yo
dvijatiḥ ca śvapacādhikaḥ

Nāradīya Purāṇa,
quoted in *Bhakti-sandarbha* (*Anuccheda* 100)

O King, even an outcaste who is a devotee of Viṣṇu is superior to a *brāhmaṇa* devoid of *bhakti*. Moreover, a *sannyāsī* who is devoid of *viṣṇu-bhakti* is even more wretched than an outcaste.

The authentic scriptures have established *daiva-varnāśrama*, the theistic social order, not *adaiva-varnāśrama*, the secular social order. In the modernistic *adaiva-varnāśrama* system, only the son of a *brāhmaṇa* is a *brāhmaṇa*, whether he has the proper brahminical qualities or not.

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However in *daiva-varnāśrama*, one's brahminical status is determined by one's qualities and activities. *Brāhmaṇas* are considered to have appeared from the mouth of Lord Brahmā, the first preacher of Vedic knowledge. One who does not study the Vedas can never be a *brāhmaṇa*, although he may have taken birth in a dynasty of *brāhmaṇas*. The only genuine *brāhmaṇa* is a person who follows the righteous conduct of Brahmā, that is, a person who is completely dedicated to *brahma* in thoughts and in all ways, and who knows or is searching for *brahma-tattva*. In *Bhagavad-gītā* (4.13), the social orders have been accepted according to the qualities and behaviour of the individual: *cātur-varṇyaṁ mayā sṛṣṭaṁ guṇa-karma-vibhāgaśaḥ / tasya kartāram api māṁ viddhy akartāram avyayam.*

It has also been stated in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (7.11.35):

yasya yal lakṣaṇaṁ proktaṁ
puṁso varṇābhivyañjakam
yad anyatrāpi dṛśyeta
tat tenaiva vinirdiśet

In other words, if a person has all the qualities characterizing a particular caste in human society, it should be understood he is of the caste for which he is qualified, even if he took birth in another. (*Varṇa* must not be determined by birth alone.)

sthito brāhmaṇa-dharmeṇa
brāhmaṇyam upajīvati
kṣatriyo vātha vaiśyo vā
brahma-bhūyaṁ sa gacchati

Mahābhārata
(*Anuśāsana-parva* 143.8)

Nīlakaṇṭha (Śiva) speaks thus: *Kṣatriyas* or *vaiśyas* who observe brahminical behaviour and spend their days living in accordance with brahminical conduct (*brahma-vṛtti*) can achieve the position of *brāhmaṇas*.

"In the modernistic *adaiva-varnāśrama* system, only the son of a *brāhmaṇa* is a *brāhmaṇa*, whether he has the proper brahminical qualities or not. However in *daiva-varnāśrama*, one's brahminical status is determined by one's qualities and activities."

Śruti establishes this same point in the discussion between Satyakāma Jābāla and Gautama, as described in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (4.4.4–5):

taṁ hovāca kiṁ gotro nu saumayasīti, sa hovāca, nāham etad veda bho yad gotro 'hamsmi, apṛcchaṁ mātaraṁ, sā mā pratyabravīt—vahvahaṁ carantī paricāriṇī yauvane tvāmalabhe, sā 'hametanna veda yad gotros tvam asi, jabālā tu nāmā aham asmi, satyakāmo nāma tvam asīti, so 'haṁ satyakāmo jābālo 'smi bho iti. taṁ hovāca, naitad brāhmaṇo vivaktumarhati, samidhaṁ saumyāhara, upa tvā neṣye na satyādgā iti.

Gautama said to Satyakāma, "O *saumya* (*brāhmaṇa*), from which *gotra* (genealogical caste) are you?"

He replied, "I do not know what my *gotra* is. When I asked my mother, she told me, 'I do not know to which dynasty (*gotra*) you belong.

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In my youth, I was a maidservant for many men when I begot you as my son. My name is Jabālā and your name is Satyakāma.' Thus I am Satyakāma Jābāla."

Gautama exclaimed, "Dear child, one who is not a *brāhmaṇa* cannot speak the truth as you have; thus you are a *brāhmaṇa*. O *saumya* (*dvija* – twice-born), bring wood for the sacrifice and I will perform your sacred thread ceremony (*upanāyana saṁskāra*). Never deviate from the truth."

Śrī Ṛṣabhadeva, who was an incarnation of Bhagavān, had one hundred sons of whom eighty-one were *brāhmaṇas* accomplished in knowledge of Veda, nine (the Nava-yogendras) were *mahā-bhāgavatas*, and the remainder were *kṣatriyas*. Among the sons who were *kṣatriyas*, Bhārata, who was decorated with all desirable qualities, was the emperor. India was named Bhārata-varṣa after him. Here also we see that the divisions of *varṇa* are determined according to the qualities and activities found in the many sons of one father.

Eligibility for serving Śrī Śālagrāma

Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī has a full understanding of *vaiṣṇava-smṛti*, and he has refuted the imaginative considerations of certain hateful, envious *smārtas*. He has written in his *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* that certain *smārtas* who are engrossed in the bodily concept of life believe that only men who have taken birth in a *brāhmaṇa* dynasty are eligible to worship Śālagrāma. They think that women are not eligible to worship Śālagrāma under any circumstances, because they are *śūdras*, even if they are born *brāhmaṇas*. However, these points are opposed to *śāstra* in all respects. Males or females who are initiated into *viṣṇu-mantra* by a bona fide *guru* are eligible to perform *arcana*, regardless of birth. In his *Digdarśinī-ṭīkā*, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī has quoted many scriptural references as evidence to support his point of view. He has quoted the words of Bhagavān Kapiladeva from the conversation between Bhagavān Kapila and His mother, Devahūti, found in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.33.6):

yan-nāmadheya-śravaṇānukīrtanād
yat-prahvaṇād yat-smaraṇād api kvacit
śvādo 'pi sadyaḥ savanāya kalpate
kutaḥ punas te bhagavan nu darśanāt

O Bhagavān, even a person born in a family of untouchable dog-eaters immediately becomes eligible to perform celestial Vedic sacrifices (*soma-yajña*) if he hears Your name and afterwards performs *kīrtana*, offers obeisances to You and remembers You. What more can be said about one who has actually attained Your audience?

Furthermore, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī has clarified this point with an example from the life history of Pṛthu Mahārāja. Although Śrī Pṛthu Mahārāja was the emperor of the entire Earth planet consisting of seven islands, he never enforced discipline or punishment upon *brāhmaṇas* born in the line of *ṛṣis* or upon Vaiṣṇavas, who, regardless of which family they are born into, belong to *acyuta-gotra*, the dynasty of the infallible Supreme Lord (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.21.12). Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī has also given evidence from *Purañjana-upākhyāna* that King Purañjana also never

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ordained punishment for *brāhmaṇas* and Vaiṣṇavas (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.26.24). Therefore, women as well as *śūdras* are eligible to perform *arcana* of Śrī Śālagrāma once they are initiated into the *viṣṇu-mantra* by a bona fide *guru*, because they also become equal to *brāhmaṇas* and Vaiṣṇavas. Food offerings cooked by them can certainly be offered to Śrī Bhagavān and *sad-guru*. It would be an offence to disregard this conclusion.

Śrīla Gurupāda-padma on śrī vigraha-tattva

(A compilation of instructions in relation to *śrī vigraha-tattva* collected from the speeches delivered by Śrīla Ācārya Kesarī on the occasion of the deity installation at Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti's Śrī Pichladā Gauḍīya Maṭha in 1959 and at Śrī Caitanya Gauḍīya Maṭha, Śrī Vṛndāvana-dhāma, in 1962.)

Throughout the authentic scriptures, such as the Vedas, Upaniṣads and Purāṇas, there are descriptions of the *sac-cid-ānanda vigraha* of Bhagavān along with the method of worship. Some people consider the Supreme Truth to be formless, devoid of attributes, devoid of potency (*śakti*) and unchangeable. In their opinion the *para-tattva* has no individual form (*vigraha*). If He assumed a form He would have to accept birth and death, and it would not be possible for Him to be all-pervading.

Actually, those who propound a conception of formlessness are not liberated from their own thought processes, which are permeated with the idea of form. They try to imagine formlessness, but the concept of 'formful-ness' is still the centre of their denial of form. 'Īśvara has no shape, no form, no qualities and no potency' – these conjectures are all incorrect. The root of this false imagination is the *śunya-vāda* (voidism) of the Buddhists, or the anti-Vedic theory of atheism.

Furthermore, it will not be entirely inappropriate to say whatever theory of formlessness is current in our country today is the result of the Christian religion. The *karma-vāda* (philosophy propagating the performance of pious actions) of institutions such as the Bhārata Sevāśrama Saṅgha, the Rāmakṛṣṇa Mission and the modern Ārya Samāja is completely the remains of Christian *dharma*, because the ancient *karma-vāda* of our country is in all respects based on the Vedic injunctions. Therefore, in literatures such as the *Bhagavad-gītā* or other Smṛtis and Saṁhitās, there is no mention of pious acts (*karmas*) other than Vedic *karmas*. These people have done great harm to the world by preaching non-Vedic ideologies.

If the Christian conception of formlessness is indeed true, then what is the meaning of constructing places of worship and establishing the sign of the cross inside huge churches and on the tops of their steeples? Why do they not perform worship while looking at the sky in an open field? The most authoritative Christian literature is the Bible, and there it is written, 'God created man in His own image'. That is, Īśvara has made man resembling His own form. Why do they not remove this statement from the Bible, in which the human-like form of Bhagavān has been accepted?

Similarly, in the holy Koran of the Muslims, who propound formlessness, there is an authoritative statement (*āyatta*) in one of the narrations (*hadīsa*) that resembles the words from the Bible. I will quote as what I remember: *innālāhā khālākā men sūrātahi. Sūrat* means 'shape' or 'form'. "God

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has made man corresponding to His own form." Thus the human-like form of Parameśvara is supported by both the Koran and the Bible. Under such circumstances, why do those supporters of formlessness who have taken shelter of Muslim *dharma* bother to construct mosques? Why do they, also, not meditate on the formless Absolute, in the open sky or within the ocean?

The Buddhists and Jains are also *nirākāra-vādīs*, proponents of formlessness. But the Buddhists and Jains have huge deities in their temples in places such as Boddhagayā, Kāśī, Sāranātha, Ajantā and Elorā. Mount Ābū, Paṇḍharapura and Kolkata's Pareśanātha temple are examples of the deity worship performed by the Jains. According to Purī's ancient history, the Buddhists attacked the temple and took control of it. At that time the Buddhists used to honour Jagannātha-deva, considering Him to be Buddhadeva, Subhadrā to be *kirti* (fame), Balarāma to be *dharma* (religion) and Sudarśana to be *saṅgha* (community). After driving the Buddhists from Purī, Ācārya Śaṅkara again established the proper worship of Jagannātha, Baladeva and Subhadrā.

In Indian literature, it is the indisputable truth that Parameśvara is the cause of which the visible universe is the effect. According to the theory of cause and effect, there is an inseparable relationship between them. Whatever is seen in the effect must exist in a subtle form within the cause. It is impossible in all respects for something which is not present in the cause to be present in the effect. Some philosophers maintain that a substance may be present in the effect even if it does not exist in the cause. The defect in this point of view is that, if one accepts an effect without a cause, then anything and everything could manifest from each substance. For instance, oil could be obtained from dust, ghee from water, and a mango could be obtained from an acacia tree. But this is not so. The fact is that whatever potential substance is in a seed (the cause), that very substance will manifest as the effect, just as oil comes from mustard and sesame seeds, ghee comes from milk, and mangoes come from mango trees.

Thus, as many forms as are visible in the effect – in the form of this universe – all must necessarily exist in the cause, *brahma*. If this were not so, and if *brahma* were formless, then this visible universe full of innumerable forms could not have arisen from it. Thus the deity of Bhagavān and the existence of the potential for the universe's innumerable forms within Him is proved by the theory of cause and effect.

To accept that the universe has originated from a formless *brahma* that is devoid of attributes is tantamount to accepting that something or everything is born from nothing. But we do not see this happening. Rather, Parameśvara has been accepted in the Vedic scriptures as the *pūrṇa-tattva*, the complete truth: *pūrṇam adaḥ pūrṇam idam*. The *Gītā* 2.16 also proclaims the very same conclusion: "*nāsato vidyate bhāvo nābhāvo vidyate sataḥ* – there is no permanent existence of the *asat*, the temporary, and no cessation of the *sat*, the eternal truth." Thus the deity of Bhagavān, the Personality of complete existence, is established beyond a doubt. In various places in the Śruti, *brahma* has been called *nirākāra* (formless), *nirguṇa* (without qualities), *arūpa* (without features) and *nirviśeṣa* (devoid of attributes). However, this does not mean that *brahma* is fundamentally *nirviśeṣa*, *nirākāra* and *śūnya* (void). The words *nirguṇa*, *nirākāra*, *arūpa* and *nirviśeṣa* are not prominent. It is *ākāra* (with shape), *rūpa* (form), *guṇa* (qualities) and *viśeṣa*

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(attributes) which are given prominence. Words such as *nirākāra, arūpa, nirguṇa* and *nirviśeṣa* signify the negation of the root words, and are derived from *ākāra, rūpa, guṇa* and *viśeṣa*. Therefore, *para-tattva* with *vigraha, rūpa* and *guṇa* is *saviśeṣa-tattva*, possessed of attributes. Why, then, has He been called *arūpa* and so on in the Śruti? The *śāstras* have given the answer to this:

acintyāḥ khalu ye bhāvā
na taṁs tarkeṇa sādhayet
prakṛtibhyaḥ paraṁ yat tu
tad acintyasya lakṣaṇam

Mahābhārata
(*Bhīṣma-parva* 5.12)

It is not proper to apply logic and argument to that existence which is *acintya*, inconceivable. That which is inconceivable is beyond material nature.

yā yā śrutir jalpati nirviśeṣaṁ
sā sābhidhatte saviśeṣameva
vicārayoge sati hanta tāsāṁ
prāyo valīyaḥ saviśeṣameva

Hayaśīra-pañcarātra

Wherever Śrutis have initially described the *tattva-vastu* as devoid of attributes (*nirviśeṣa*), they have, in the end, established *saviśeṣa-tattva* (truth with attributes), not the *nirviśeṣa-tattva*. *Nirviśeṣa* and *saviśeṣa* are both eternal qualities of Bhagavān. Nevertheless, after seriously deliberating on the matter, it is the *saviśeṣa-tattva* which turns out to be prominent, because in this world there is experience of only the *saviśeṣa-tattva*. There is no experience of the *nirviśeṣa-tattva*.

The purport is that *para-tattva* has been called *acintya, arūpa, nirākāra* and so on because of His being beyond *māyā*. Actually, Bhagavān has a transcendental (*aprākṛta*) form. He is the foundation of all transcendental qualities and is possessed of all transcendental features and attributes. There is not even the slightest hint of *prakṛti* (material nature) or *māyā* in His *sac-cid-ānanda* form. Words such as *nirākāra* have been stated in particular parts of the scriptures only to make us understand this fact.

Some people consider the universe and all of the forms within it to be false. But if this world is false, then the people who say such things are also false and illusory. Furthermore, the statements of such illusory people are also illusory. This establishes the reality of the world.

Some people assert that a form cannot be all-pervading. However, this charge is also incorrect. As well as being all-pervading, Parameśvara is also the possessor of all potencies (*sarva-śaktimān*). One of His potencies is His *aghaṭana-ghaṭana-paṭīyasī śakti*, that by which the impossible is made possible. So why can He not have a form? Besides, by the influence of that *śakti*, why can that form not be all-pervading? If He cannot have form and also be all-pervading, then where is His omnipotence? This type of mistaken understanding is due to a lack of *tattva-jñāna*. By the power of His *acintya-śakti*, that Parameśvara, being unborn and without origin, is also the eternal son of Śrī Yaśodā.

It is impossible to worship a formless substance. Some philosophers have given a method of worshipping *nirākāra brahma*. They say, "Any substance with shape is illusory and should be rejected. Therefore, the best *sādhana* is just to worship the formless." This opinion, however, is incorrect. Of the five gross material elements, air and ether are formless, but no one accepts them as transcendental or

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replete with eternality, cognizance and bliss. Therefore, we cannot say that the *brahma* of those who propound formlessness is worshipful just because it is formless or void like ether. In the Śrutis it has been said that liberated personalities always worship and have *darśana* of *para-tattva* through transcendental devotion (*nirguṇa-bhakti*): *tad viṣṇoḥ paramaṁ padaṁ sadā paśyanti sūrayaḥ / divīva cakṣurātatam* (*Ṛg Veda* 1.5.22.20). In other words, the divine and learned Vaiṣṇavas always have *darśana* of the supreme abode of Viṣṇu with their spiritual (*aprākṛta*) eyes. The form of *para-tattva* is clearly established by this *śruti-mantra*.

Some people say that the deity form is not mentioned anywhere in the Vedas, and that deity worship is therefore not Vedic. This charge is also erroneous and entirely unfounded, because accounts of the deity are found throughout the Vedas, for example:

(1) "*sahasrasya pratimāsi* – O Parameśvara, You have thousands of forms" (*Yajuḥ Veda* 15.65).

(2) "*arcata prārcata priyamedhāso arcata* – O intelligent men, intently worship the divine deity of Parameśvara" (*Ṛg Veda* 8.7.69.8).

(3) Further, in the *Gītā* (9.11), those who disregard the deity of Bhagavān have been called foolish (*mūḍha*) and the lowest of mankind (*narādhama*):

avajānanti māṁ mūḍhā
mānuṣīṁ tanum āśritam
paraṁ bhāvam ajānanto
mama bhūta-maheśvaram

Fools whose intelligence is bewildered by illusion disrespect Me when I appear in a human-like form, being unaware of My supreme nature as the Lord of all beings.

(4) In *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (3.1):

yato vā imāni bhūtāni jāyante
yena jātāni jīvanti
yat prayanty abhisaṁviśanti
tad vijijñāsasva tad brahma

Know that *brahma* as that by whom the universe is created (the ablative case), by whom the universe is protected and maintained (the instrumental case) and into whom the universe enters at the time of devastation (the locative case).

That *brahma* in whom there are these three cases cannot be formless (*nirākāra*). We see fruit falling from a tree, but if we do not accept the existence of the tree, how can [we see] fruit fall from it? The falling of fruit is possible only if we accept the existence of the tree. Similarly, the appearance of the universe, which is full of form, is only possible if its source, *brahma*, also has form.

(5) *Māyāvādīs* say that the form of Bhagavān has been denied in *Vedānta-sūtra*, in the *sūtras arūpavadeva tat-pradhānatvāt* (3.2.14) and *na pratīke na hi saḥ* (4.1.4). However, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has established the deity of *brahma* with these very same *sūtras*. The meaning of *arūpavadeva* is not that *brahma* has no transcendental form. Rather, this *sūtra* is clear evidence that *brahma* has form, but it seems to those who are unqualified that He is *arūpa*, or formless. In the word *arūpavat*, the suffix *vatup* has been used. According to Sanskrit grammar, *vatup* is used in the sense of similarity (*tulya*). Thus *arūpavat* conveys *na-rūpavat*, appearing to not have form. Rather, His own form, the *vigraha*, is predominant. There is

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no difference between *brahma* Himself and His *vigraha*. Similarly, in the next *sūtra*, *na-pratikena* means '*śrī vigraha* is not a symbol of *brahma*', and *saḥ* means 'this *vigraha* is *brahma* Himself'. At the time of taking *darśana* of Śrī Jagannātha, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu said, "*pratimā naha tumi,—sākṣāt vrajendra-nandana* – You are not a statue; You are directly Kṛṣṇa, the son of the king of Vraja" (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā* 5.96).

The following *mantra* from *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (3.19) denies that the form of *brahma* is material and establishes His transcendental form of eternality, cognizance and bliss:

apāṇipādo javano grahītā
paśyatyacakṣuḥ sa śṛṇotyakarṇaḥ
sa vetti vedyaṁ na ca tasyāsti vettā
tam āhur agryaṁ puruṣaṁ mahāntam

That is, although *para-brahma* is devoid of material hands, He accepts all things. Although devoid of material feet, He comes and goes everywhere, at great speed. Although devoid of material eyes, He sees everything. The purport is that His form is not material but *aprākṛta* (transcendental) and *sac-cid-ānanda*, composed of eternal existence, cognizance and bliss – *īśvaraḥ paramaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ*.

The crest jewel of all evidence, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.14.32), also proclaims that Śrī Nanda-nandana is the complete, supremely blissful, eternal *brahma*: *yan-mitraṁ paramānandaṁ pūrṇaṁ brahma sanātanam*.

The suffix *vatup* is never used to convey a substance that does not exist. It is not accepted that a class exists of completely non-existent substances. We cannot make statements such as: "There is a substance that does not exist." We have already established this earlier in relation to the evidence of the *Gītā* 2.16, *nāsato vidyate bhāvaḥ*. The compiler of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Vedavyāsa, is indeed the compiler of *Vedānta-sūtra*; his statements can never be contradictory. Thus it is thoroughly improper to interpret the *sūtras* as indicating formlessness when they are illuminated by verses such as *kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam*, *nanda-gopa-vrajaukasām*, *yan-mitraṁ paramānandaṁ pūrṇaṁ brahma sanātanam* and *brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhāham*. In addition to this, the form of *brahma* is also established by the aphorisms of *Vedānta-sūtra* such as, "*api saṁrādhane pratyakṣānumānābhyām* – although He is omnipresent and unmanifest, one can receive His *darśana* by worshipping Him" (3.2.24), "*prakāśaś ca karmaṇy abhyāsāt* – and when the activity is repeated, He appears" (3.2.26), and "*prakāśa vat-ca-avaiśeṣyam* – He is (not) like fire or other things, for He has no such features" (3.2.25).

The purport of *arūpavadeva tat-pradhānatvāt* is that *brahma* does not have a particular shape or form – He is Himself form (*vigraha*). That is why it has been said *arūpavat*, 'not having form or shape'. The suffix *eva* indicates the hopelessness of opposing arguments. *Brahma-rūpa*, the form of *brahma*, is predominant. There is no difference between His form (*svayam-rūpa*) and His deity (*śrī vigraha*). If you ask, "Can we accept that an omnipresent Being has a human-like form?" then the answer is, "Yes, it is possible." "*Api saṁrādhane pratyakṣānumānābhyām* – although He is omnipresent and unmanifest, one can receive His *darśana* by worshipping Him." *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.14.21) also confirms this: "*bhaktyāham ekayā grāhyaḥ* – I am obtained only through devotion."

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"However, one should bear in mind that only the *śrī vigraha* established by great liberated personalities are forms of eternality, knowledge and bliss. The *mūrti* established by conditioned souls is called *pratimā*, a statue, and the worship of such statues is prohibited in the scriptures."

This conclusion has been made even more clear in the *sūtra* '*na pratīke na hi saḥ*'. The meaning here is that one cannot attain perfection or Bhagavān by worshipping a symbol or an idol, nor is it correct to impose the presence of Bhagavān on the idol. In this regard, Ācārya Śaṅkara states, "Forms of the formless *brahma* have been imagined for the welfare of the *sādhakas*. The consciousness is purified by worshipping these imaginary forms, and when the consciousness is purified, the attainment of the formless *brahma* becomes easy." It is not correct, however, to worship Bhagavān by imagining forms or idols. The deity of eternality, knowledge and bliss (*sac-cid-ānanda mūrti*) is directly *para-brahma* Himself (*svayam-rūpa*), and He is to be worshipped. This has been stated in the aforementioned *Vedānta-sūtra* aphorism. The consideration here is this: "Can we establish the worship of a form of Bhagavān that is imaginary?" In reply to this, the *sūtra* states emphatically, *na hi* – No! "Then how will worship be performed?" *Saḥ*, by worshipping the spiritual *śrī vigraha* of Bhagavān Himself, one will meet with Him.

Therefore, it has been stated in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*: "*īśvarera śrī-vigraha sac-cid-ānandākāra* – the transcendental form of Īśvara is composed of eternal existence, cognizance and bliss" (*Madhya-līlā* 6.166). "*Cid-ānanda kṛṣṇa-vigrahe 'māyika' kari' māni / ei baḍa 'pāpa',—satya caitanyera vāṇī* – to accept the transcendental form of Kṛṣṇa to be made of the external energy is a great sin. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's statements are true" (*Madhya-līlā* 25.35). "*Pratimā naha tumi,—sākṣāt vrajendra-nandana* – You are not a statue; You are directly Vrajendra-nandana Kṛṣṇa Himself" (*Madhya-līlā* 5.96).

Therefore, the *śrī vigraha* of Bhagavān is the form of eternal existence, cognizance and bliss. However, one should bear in mind that only the *śrī vigraha* established by great liberated personalities are forms of eternality, knowledge and bliss. The *mūrti* established by conditioned souls is called *pratimā*, a statue, and the worship of such statues is prohibited in the scriptures. Just as a certified copy of a certified copy is not evidence, a duplicate statue of a deity established by a *mahāpuruṣa* is not a deity composed of *sac-cid-ānanda*. Throughout the *śāstras* it has been mentioned that endless auspiciousness for the *jīvas* comes by rendering service to *śrī vigraha*.

Refutation of the doctrine: 'there are as many paths as there are philosophies'

The most worshipful *ācārya kesarī* Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja conducted a storm-like preaching tour in many villages in Medinīpura district, West Bengal, in 1950. In thirty days he preached extensively in about forty different religious assemblies about *śrī sanātana-dharma*, the *dharma* of pure *bhakti*, as practised and expounded by

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Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. There was one large village of Medinīpura called Gehūṅkhalī, where a vast religious assembly was held. Śrī Śrīla Gurupāda-padma had come there on the request of his godbrother *param-pūjyapāda nitya-līlā-praviṣṭa* Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Bhūdeva Śrauti Mahārāja. The huge assembly had been arranged in the courtyard of a high school managed by the Rāmakṛṣṇa Mission, and the headmaster of the school, other teachers and other learned and distinguished personalities from the neighbourhood were present.

In very poetic language, Śrīla Gurupāda-padma established the *siddhānta* of *śuddha-bhakti* as practised and expounded by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, before an audience of about twenty-five thousand people. He explained that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the last limit of the Supreme Truth and the ultimate worshipful Truth for all living entities, who are His separated parts (*vibhinnāṁśa-tattva*). By constitution the living entities are the servants of Bhagavān. The *jīva's* wretched condition is due to forgetfulness of his service attitude towards the Supreme Lord.

Śrīla Gurudeva was establishing these conclusions by scriptural evidence and unquestionable reasoning, when right in the middle of the lecture, some people asked, "We have read and heard that the living entity is Śiva. Śiva, Durgā, Kālī, Gaṇeśa – these are all different names and forms of the one Bhagavān. Bhagavān is attained regardless of which viewpoint you take (*yata mata tata patha*), and regardless of which god you worship. When one goes up into the sky, all things are seen equally. Letters are posted from different post offices all arrive in the same place. One can reach Delhi on foot, by car, by train or by any other conveyance. Similarly, when the *sādhaka* is situated in an elevated position of spirituality, he sees all as one and the same. The one Bhagavān is attained by worshipping anyone, yet you accept that Kṛṣṇa alone is the exclusive object of worship and that *bhakti* to Him is the best of all means of spiritual attainment."

"No thoughtful person can accept that those who take shelter of practices in the mood of goodness, passion and ignorance will all attain the same result."

The entire audience was fascinated by Śrīla Gurudeva's brilliant reply to this question. Those who had posed the question were completely unable to respond. Following are some parts of the speech that Śrīla Gurupāda-padma delivered in that assembly.

With profound gravity, Śrīla Ācārya Kesarī said that the viewpoint put forward by the opposing party was the remnant of Christian doctrine; it is non-Vedic and it is against the verdict of *śāstra*.

He said that the slogan *yata mata tata patha* means that all philosophical systems are different paths to attain the same Bhagavān. First of all, let us deliberate upon this. This opinion is misleading and against scripture in all respects. If we accept it, then we will have to regard everyone's conceptions to be equal, whether they are thieves, plunderers, prostitutes, saints or materialists. No thoughtful person can accept that those who take shelter of practices in the mood of goodness, passion and ignorance (*sāttvika, rājasika* and *tāmasika* practices) will all attain the same result. The destination of violent people who eat meat, fish and eggs is not the same as that of righteous people who harbour a pure *sāttvika* conception

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and are devoted to *sāttvika* and transcendental (*nirguṇa*) matters. No intelligent person can accept such a view.

Revealed scriptures such as *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and the *Gītā* have not described all religions or paths to be equal. On the contrary, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* states that the only supreme *dharma* for all living entities is *bhakti* to Adhokṣaja Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, which should be unmotivated and uninterrupted like a stream of oil:

sa vai puṁsāṁ paro dharmo
yato bhaktir adhokṣaje
ahaituky apratihatā
yayātmā suprasīdati

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.2.6)

dharmaḥ projjhita-kaitavo 'tra
paramo nirmatsarāṇāṁ sataṁ
vedyaṁ vāstavam atra vastu
śivadaṁ tāpa-trayonmūlanam
śrīmad-bhāgavate mahā-muni-kṛte
kiṁ vā parair īśvaraḥ
sadyo hṛdy avarudhyate 'tra
kṛtibhiḥ śuśrūṣubhis tat-kṣaṇāt

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.1.2)

The meaning here is that apart from devotion to the Supreme Lord, all other opinions that go by the name *dharma* are useless and hypocritical. Paths other than pure *bhakti* cannot enable one to meet with Kṛṣṇa. Bhagavān can be pleased only by the devotion described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

The *Gītā* also states that those who worship the demigods attain the planets of the demigods, those who worship the forefathers go to the planets of the forefathers (Pitṛloka), and those who worship the spirits attain the planets of the spirits. Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa is not attained by these mundane worldly methods of worship. Service to Kṛṣṇa in Kṛṣṇa-loka can be attained only by pure devotion (*śuddha-bhakti*). If all methods of worship were the same, then Kṛṣṇa would not have said in the *Gītā* (9.25, 7.20, 7.23):

yānti deva-vratā devān
pitṝn yānti pitṛ-vratāḥ
bhūtāni yānti bhūtejyā
yānti mad-yājino 'pi mām

Those who worship the demigods go to the planets of the demigods, those who worship the forefathers go to the planets of the forefathers, those who worship the spirits go to the planets of the spirits, and those who worship Me will surely come to Me.

kāmais tais tair hṛta-jñānāḥ
prapadyante 'nya-devatāḥ
taṁ taṁ niyamam āsthāya
prakṛtyā niyatāḥ svayā

Those whose knowledge has been stolen by desires to drive away distress and so on take shelter of appropriate regulations and worship the demigods, being impelled by their own natures.

antavat tu phalaṁ teṣāṁ
tad bhavaty alpa-medhasām
devān deva-yajo yānti
mad-bhaktā yānti mām api

The result of the worship performed by those people of meagre intelligence, however, is perishable. The worshipers of the demigods attain the demigods and My devotees come to Me.

Giving up Kṛṣṇa to worship various demigods has been called unlawful.

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ye 'py anya-devatā-bhaktā
yajante śraddhayānvitāḥ
te 'pi mām eva kaunteya
yajanty avidhi-pūrvakam

Bhagavad-gītā (9.23)

O son of Kuntī, those who worship demigods with faith actually worship Me alone, but in a way that is unauthorized.

Some people state that Viṣṇu, Gaṇeśa, Durgā, Kālī and Śiva are all one and the same. There is no fundamental, or intrinsic, difference between them; they are different in name only, and the result of worshipping all of them is the same. However this concept is not in agreement with *śāstra*.

tad viṣṇoḥ paramaṁ padaṁ
sadā paśyanti sūrayaḥ
divīva cakṣurātatam

tad viprāso vipanyavo
jāgṛvāṁsaḥ samindhate
viṣṇor yat paramaṁ padam

Ṛg Veda (1.5.22.20–21)

As eyes are capable of seeing the sun in the sky without impediment, similarly liberated *mahāpuruṣas* always see the supreme abode of Parameśvara Viṣṇu. The *sādhus*, who are devoted to Bhagavān, and who are free from defects such as the tendency to be mistaken or deluded, preach everywhere about Viṣṇu's supreme abode.

na tasya kāryaṁ karaṇaṁ ca vidyate
na tat samaś cābhyadhikaś ca dṛśyate
parāsya śaktir vividhaiva śrūyate
svābhāvikī jñāna-bala-kriyā ca

Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad (6.8)

The activities of that *para-brahma* Paramātmā are not material because His senses, such as His hands and feet, are not material. He is splendidly present in all places at the same time in His spiritual body. Therefore, what to speak of being greater than Him, no one is even equal to Him. It is heard that Parameśvara has various types of divine potencies, among which His *jñāna-śakti* (knowledge potency), *bala-śakti* (strength potency) and *kriyā-śakti* (action potency) are prominent. These three potencies are called *cit-śakti* (*saṁvit*), *sat-śakti* (*sandhinī*) and *ānanda-śakti* (*hlādinī*) respectively.

In *Gītā* 7.7 Kṛṣṇa declares: "*mattaḥ parataraṁ nānyat kiñcid asti dhanañjaya* – O conqueror of riches, Dhanañjaya, there is nothing superior to Me." And in 15.15, "*vedaiś ca sarvair aham eva vedyo vedānta-kṛd veda-vid eva cāham* – by all the Vedas I alone am to be known. Indeed, I am the compiler of Vedānta and the knower of the Vedas."

It is established by all this authentic evidence that *viṣṇu-tattva* is the Supreme Truth. It has not been stated anywhere in the *śāstra* that demigods such as Gaṇeśa, Kālī, Durgā and Sūrya are equal to Viṣṇu. On the contrary, it is said that those who consider them equal to Nārāyaṇa are offenders.

yas tu nārāyaṇaṁ devaṁ
brahma-rudrādi-daivataiḥ
samatvenaiva vīkṣeta
sa pāṣaṇḍī bhaved dhruvam

Vaiṣṇava-tantra

One who considers Śrī Nārāyaṇa to be in the same category as demigods, such as Brahmā and Rudra, is a *pāṣaṇḍī*, an offensive non-believer.

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Moreover, in *Gītā* (6.46–47) it has been said:

tapasvibhyo 'dhiko yogī
jñānibhyo 'pi mato 'dhikaḥ
karmibhyaś cādhiko yogī
tasmād yogī bhavārjuna

yoginām api sarveṣāṁ
mad-gatenāntarātmanā
śraddhāvān bhajate yo māṁ
sa me yuktatamo mataḥ

The *yogī* is superior to fruitive workers who have material desires, *tapasvīs* (those engaged in the performance of austerities) and *jñānīs* (those engaged in the cultivation of knowledge). Therefore, O Arjuna, be a *yogī*. However, even among these *yogīs*, those who do *bhajana* of Me, Vāsudeva, being devoted to Me with complete faith, are the best of all; this is My opinion. Therefore, become a *yogī* like this.

Bhagavān cannot be easily attained by any means other than *bhakti*. Śrī Kṛṣṇa has personally said:

na sādhyati māṁ yogo
na sāṅkhyaṁ dharma uddhava
na svādhyāyas tapas tyāgo
yathā bhaktir mamorjitā

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.14.20)

Yoga-sādhana, *jñāna-vijñāna*, religious ceremonies, chanting *mantras*, austerities, studying the Vedas and renunciation are not sufficient to attain Me. I can only be attained by devotional service saturated with unalloyed *prema*.

This same conclusion has also been expressed in Śruti: "*bhaktir evainaṁ nayati bhaktir evainaṁ darśayati / bhakti-vaśaḥ puruṣo bhaktir eva bhūyasī* – it is only unalloyed *bhagavad-bhakti* that carries the *jīvas* to Bhagavān and brings about their audience with Him and eternal engagement in service to Him. Bhagavān is only controlled by *bhakti*" (*Māṭhara-śruti* quoted in Madhvācārya's commentary on *Vedānta-sūtra* 3.3.53).

For this reason, the instruction has been given in *Bhagavad-gītā* (18.66) to give up all temporary *dharmas* related to the body and mind and surrender to Bhagavān, "*sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja*." Nowhere in the authentic *śāstras* has it been stated that all opinions, paths or worldly *dharmas* are the same. People who preach this misleading philosophy that all paths lead to the same goal (*yata mata tata patha*) are ignorant of *tattva*.

When one goes up a great height in an airplane, the trees and the plants, the high places and the low all appear to be the same, but this simply indicates the observer's lack of seeing power. His eyes cannot properly see remote objects. Similarly, because of a lack of *tattva-jñāna*, ignorant people, who see everything from their own limited material viewpoint, consider all opinions – good and bad – to be equal. This simply reveals their lack of knowledge. It is not that everyone is one, nor does everyone become one if someone whose vision is coloured by nescience sees them as so. Those who perform forbidden activities are not the same as those who engage in pious activities, those who perform prescribed duties without attachment, *jñāna-yogīs* or *bhakti-yogīs*. Their activities are different, the results of their activities are different, and their destinations are different. If it were not so, this opinion would not have been refuted in the *Gītā* and elsewhere.

Only ignorant, foolish people say that a bullock cart, a horse-drawn carriage, a train or a

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car can take you to the same destination, and that all roads lead to the same destination. Countries and islands such as England, Australia or Hawaii are situated in the middle of the ocean; they cannot be reached by bullock cart, horse-drawn carriage or car. Everyone acknowledges this fact. Even passengers on the same train cannot arrive at the same destination if they have tickets for different places. Similarly, those who adopt various methods of attainment to realize various goals, such as material sense gratification, liberation, or love of God, cannot all attain the same result of loving service to Bhagavān. Śrī Kṛṣṇa has explained this nicely in *Bhagavad-gītā* 4.11, "*ye yathā māṁ prapadyante* – however one renders service to Me I reciprocate with him accordingly."

Some people also say, "All letters reach the same destination even if you post them from different post offices. Similarly, all worshipers attain the same Supreme Lord, no matter what demigod they worship." But this argument is also utterly imaginary; it is born of ignorance. If the address written on different letters is the same, then they will all arrive at the same place, regardless of where they were posted. This is correct. But if letters have different addresses written on them, then they will reach different destinations. Similarly, if all worshipers perform the same exclusive worship of Svayam Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, which culminates in *bhakti*, then they become purified and will attain Bhagavān. This sequence is shown in a beautiful way in *Bhagavad-gītā*.

Nowadays we see many slogans which are opposed to the conclusions of scripture. The authentic scriptures do not at all support ideas such as 'service to *daridra-nārāyaṇa*' (God in the form of the poverty-stricken), *janatā-janārdana* (the common people are God) and *jīva hi śiva*

"Those who say that the jīva becomes Śiva after attaining *jñāna* and becoming liberated are atheists. At this stage, they call Mahādeva Śaṅkara (Śiva) 'Father' and they address Bhavānī as 'Mother', but when they are liberated and they have become Śiva, they will see Bhavānī as their wife. Therefore Bhavānī in the form of Durgā cuts the throats of such miscreants and wears a garland of their skulls."

(the living entity is Śiva). If poverty-stricken people are Nārāyaṇa, then what about wealthy and respectable people who have performed pious activities in their previous births? What about righteous, learned and honourable people? Why is it that they cannot be Nārāyaṇa? Those who accept the notion of *daridra-nārāyaṇa* are all atheists impelled by base *saṁskāras*, or impressions from previous births. They have no relation whatsoever with pure *ātmā-dharma*.

To this day no *jīva* has ever succeeded in becoming Bhagavān. The *ātmā*, the individual soul, and Paramātmā, the Supreme Soul, have separate individual natures by their very constitution. The *jīvātmā* is minute, subject to the control of *māyā* and helpless in regard to tasting the results of his activities. In contrast, Paramātmā is the creator, master and maintainer of the entire universe and He is the Lord of *māyā*.

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How can these two be called one? Those who maintain such a conception propound a vicious brand of folly. They are mistaken in all respects.

Those who say that the *jīva* becomes Śiva after attaining *jñāna* and becoming liberated are atheists. At this stage, they call Mahādeva Śaṅkara (Śiva) 'Father' and they address Bhavānī as 'Mother', but when they are liberated and they have become Śiva, they will see Bhavānī as their wife. Therefore Bhavānī in the form of Durgā cuts the throats of such miscreants and wears a garland of their skulls. Evidence of this can be found in many places in *śāstra*.

After hearing Śrīla Ācārya Kesarī's brilliant speech, some of the teachers who were present placed a proposal before Śrī Gurudeva. They offered to bring the main *svāmījī* of the Rāmakṛṣṇa Mission Maṭha located in Velūra and investigate this subject by means of a scriptural debate in a special assembly. "We will call him tomorrow," they said. Ācārya Kesarī replied, "Once he hears my name he will never come." Śrīla Gurudeva waited for three or four days for the *sannyāsīs* of the Rāmakṛṣṇa Mission, but it became obvious that they were not prepared for a scriptural debate at any cost.

Refutation of the sahajiyā doctrine

Prākṛta-sahajiyās are those who understand the transcendental pastimes (*aprākṛta-līlā*) of the transcendental Supreme Lord to be *prākṛta*, or mundane, like the affairs of ordinary men and women, and who think that the *aprākṛta-tattva* (transcendental truth) is attained by material practices. One can simply express it like this: Contrary to the instructions of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, the transcendental preceptor of divine mellows, they imagine themselves to be *gopīs*. They decorate the inert, gross, material male body in the dress of a woman and act out performing *bhajana* with their fabricated *gopī-bhāva*. Those who do this are called *prākṛta-sahajiyās*. While maintaining the mood of a male within their hearts, these people outwardly hide their male bodies by keeping long hair like women, and wearing rings in their noses, long veils, *sārīs* or voluminous skirts, bodices, bangles on their wrists, girdles on their waists, ankle-bells on their feet, golden ornaments and so on. They introduce themselves by names like Lalitā or Viśākhā. On the pretext of *parakīya-bhajana*, they keep young women in their *āśramas* as maidservants and maintain illicit relations with them. Such is their anti-scriptural conduct.

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Others do not adorn their male bodies in the dress of women but support the conception of those who do. With flirtatious gestures, they indiscriminately sing about the confidential loving play of Rāī-Kānū (Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa) in the presence of any ordinary people in the marketplace, without considering the eligibility of their audience. They give pretentious lectures on *rāsa-līlā* and imitate it. Thus these debauchees cheapen the *aprākṛta-rasa* for the *jaḍa* (material) *rasa*. They believe that it is absolutely necessary to keep the company of another's wife as an illicit paramour in order to realize *aprākṛta-rasa*. Conversely, they think that Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī and Śrīla Narottama Ṭhākura cannot possibly be *rasika*, because Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī was a *brahmacārī* from boyhood and Śrīla Narottama Ṭhākura never entered household life. Such people, also, come in the category of *prākṛta-sahajiyā*.

Externally Śrīman Mahāprabhu was male, but internally He used to nurture the mood of a *gopī* in the service of Kṛṣṇa. These people act in a completely contradictory manner. They nurture the mood of a male within their hearts but externally they hide it by trying to cover their outer limbs with the attire of a *gopī*. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has explained that *gopī-bhāva* is the *dharma* of the *ātmā*, but the *prākṛta-sahajiyās* think that *gopī-bhāva* is the *dharma* of the body.

antare niṣṭhā kara, bāhye loka-vyavahāra
acirāt kṛṣṇa tomāya karibe uddhāra

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta
(*Madhya-līlā* 16.239)

'mane' nija-siddha-deha kariyā bhāvana
rātri-dine kare vraje kṛṣṇera sevana

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta
(*Madhya-līlā* 22.157)

"Externally Śrīman Mahāprabhu was male, but internally He used to nurture the mood of a *gopī* in the service of Kṛṣṇa. These people act in a completely contradictory manner. They nurture the mood of a male within their hearts but externally they hide it by trying to cover their outer limbs with the attire of a *gopī*."

Here Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is saying that in the beginning, one's *niṣṭhā*, firm faith, is to be kept within the core of one's heart, and at the same time one is to behave like an ordinary person in order to sustain one's life. Gradually, when one's faith becomes mature, one's worldly activities will also come to correspond with one's *bhajana*; that is, they will become favourable to *bhajana*. In such a condition, one should meditate on one's internally conceived *siddha-deha* which is suitable for the service of the Divine Couple, and in the core of one's heart one should mentally serve Them (*aprākṛta mānasī-sevā*). By following this procedure, at first one attains *svarūpa-siddhi*, realization of one's eternal spiritual body. Ultimately, at the stage of *vastu-siddhi* in *prakaṭa* Vraja, after giving up the material body, one receives the body of a *gopī* corresponding to one's internally conceived *siddha-deha*.

In *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, in the section on *rāgānuga-bhakti-sādhana* (1.2.293–295), Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has said:

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kṛṣṇaṁ smaran janaṁ cāsya
preṣṭhaṁ nija-samīhitam
tat-tat-kathā-rataś cāsau
kuryād vāsaṁ vraje sadā

sevā sādhaka-rūpeṇa
siddha-rūpeṇa cātra hi
tad-bhāva-lipsunā kāryā
vraja-lokānusārataḥ

śravaṇot-kīrtanādīni
vaidha-bhakty uditāni tu
yānyaṅgāni ca tānyatra
vijñeyāni manīṣibhiḥ

The meaning is that one should always reside in Vraja, continuously remembering Śrī Kṛṣṇa and those dear associates of His whom one aspires to follow, and one should remain absorbed in hearing about their pastimes. If one is unable to reside in Vraja directly, then one should reside in Vraja by mind. On the path of spontaneous devotion (*rāgānuga*), one should follow Kṛṣṇa's intimate beloved associates and their followers, always remaining absorbed in their service. This should be done with the *sādhaka-rūpa*, the present external material body, and also in *siddha-rūpa*, the internally conceived body suitable for rendering the type of service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa for which one's heart is eager. One should eagerly desire the *bhāva*, the special loving mood, of those associates of Kṛṣṇa in Vraja whom one aspires to follow. Learned scholars who know *bhakti-tattva* point out that in *vaidhī-bhakti* one is instructed to observe the limbs of *bhakti* such as *śravaṇa* and *kīrtana* according to one's eligibility. These same instructions also apply in *rāgānuga-bhakti*.

Śrīman Mahāprabhu and Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, who fulfilled Mahāprabhu's innermost desire, have never instructed any male practitioners to hide their male forms and keep a braid, wear a veil, skirt, blouse and ornaments of a woman, and then perform *rāgānuga-bhajana* with others' wives. Rather, in all cases they have said that such behaviour is abominable and opposed to *śāstra*. To establish a high ideal for practitioners of *bhakti*, Śrīman Mahāprabhu rejected Choṭa Haridāsa. The same immaculate ideal has also been set by the six Gosvāmīs. In his *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, *Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi* and other writings, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has advised the performance of *sādhana-bhajana* following in the cooling footprints of the Śrutis (the personified Vedas) and the sages of Daṇḍakāraṇya. Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara, Śrī Rāya Rāmānanda, Śrī Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī, Śrī Narottama Ṭhākura, Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura and others are shining examples of such *bhajana*. How pure their lives were! It is proper for pure devotees to follow such great spiritual personalities.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has written in his essay entitled *The Depravity of the Sahajiyā Doctrine*: "A loathsome ideology is spreading insidiously in many places in Bengal. All the activities and conduct prescribed by this *sahajiyā* doctrine are extremely corrupt and contemptible. The *jīva* is spiritual, and its only natural *dharma* is spiritual service to Kṛṣṇa. The word *sahaja* means *saha-ja*, i.e., that which arises along with the *ātmā*. For the pure *ātmā*, transcendental service to Kṛṣṇa is *sahaja*, or natural, because it is intrinsic to the *jivātmā's* constitution. However, it is not natural for one in the state of being bound by inert matter. *Sahajiyās* cheat others and are themselves cheated or deprived of their pure and natural love for Kṛṣṇa by saying that the mundane union of man and woman is a natural and spiritual *dharma*. In actuality, the union of man and woman is not a natural *dharma*. On

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the contrary, the natural *dharma* of the *ātmā* finds the union of the dull male and female bodies extremely loathsome, depraved and inappropriate. What is called *sahajiyā-dharma* nowadays is totally immoral, contrary to saintly behaviour and opposed to *śāstra*. Pure Vaiṣṇavas should be extremely careful in regard to this. That *dharma* in which the custom is to accept a *mantra* in the left ear is in all respects a deviation.

"We never find anywhere in the scriptures instructions such as, 'One should associate with a woman in order to attain Vrajendra-nandana.' On entering into *madhura-rasa*, the minute conscious *jīva* attains his natural condition. Then there is no necessity whatsoever to associate with the inanimate material nature. Choṭa Haridāsa, himself being *prakṛti* [female nature, that is, to be enjoyed by the Supreme Male], was rejected by Mahāprabhu for committing the offence of conversing in *puruṣa-bhāva* (male mood) with another *prakṛti*. Licentious people misinterpret the verse *vairāgī kare prakṛti sambhāṣaṇa* in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Antya-līlā* 2.117) and create a path of their own sense gratification, but pure Vaiṣṇavas neglect them. Association with a married woman is not part of *bhajana* even for householders; therefore association with women has been accepted in a regulated way that is free from sin, for conducting household life.

"*Bhajana* is a completely spiritual activity. When even the slightest mundane sentiment is allowed to enter, it becomes ruined."

"It is the opinion of pure Vaiṣṇavas that male *sādhakas* should perform *bhajana* and remain separate from female *sādhakas*. A female *sādhaka* should not invite any male person to her *bhajana* party. *Bhajana* is a completely spiritual activity. When even the slightest mundane sentiment is allowed to enter, it becomes ruined."

Bheka-praṇālī and siddha-praṇālī

In recent times in Bengal and Vraja, in places such as Rādhā-kuṇḍa and Vṛndāvana, the custom called *bheka-dhāraṇa*, formal acceptance of the cloth of the renounced order (*bābājī-veśa*), and *siddha-praṇālī*, the process in which the spiritual master gives details of the *sādhaka's* spiritual form, intrinsic mood, etc., has perverted the intrinsic nature of the pure *bhakti* established by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and the six Gosvāmīs. Without consideration of qualification or disqualification, these people give so-called *siddha-praṇālī* and *bābājī-veśa* to adulterous fellows, debauchees and ordinary people who are ignorant of *śāstra* and *siddhānta*, to increase the numbers of their followers. Having adopted this base practice, those people fall to even greater depths of corruption and depravity.

(1) Bheka-dhāraṇa – the system of conferring bābājī-veśa

When did the custom of *bheka-dhāraṇa* come into practice? Upon investigation, we see that this custom was not current at the time of the six Gosvāmīs, Śrī Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī, Śrī Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī and others because these personalities were instinctively *paramahaṁsas*. After taking an old *dhotī* from Tapana Miśra, it was natural for

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Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī to tear it up and wear it as outer cloth and *ḍor-kaupīna*, the loin cloth worn by a *paramahaṁsa*. There is no mention at all about giving *siddha-praṇālī* in this connection. This dress of a renunciant was adopted simply to indicate a firm dedication to *bhajana*. Similarly, one should understand this to be the same in regard to the other Gosvāmīs.

In one way, this is included in the category of the *bhikṣuka* (mendicant) *āśrama*, or *sannyāsa*, because *paramahaṁsa mahātmās* have no definite or fixed dress. They are beyond rules, regulations and the distinguishing marks of the *āśramas* such as *sannyāsa*. Since such *paramahaṁsas* are always absorbed in *bhagavat-prema*, the regulations and prohibitions of scriptures such as the Vedas are no impetus for them. But people who are not at the *paramahaṁsa* stage accept Vaiṣṇava *sannyāsa* (according to *sāttvata vaiṣṇava-smṛti* such as *Sat-kriyā-sāra-dīpikā*) or according to the same regulations they wear a white outer cloth and *ḍor-kaupīna*. This is for firm dedication to *sādhana-bhajana*, and is called *bheka-dhāraṇa*. The word *bheka* is a corrupted form of the Sanskrit word *veṣa*. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has written an essay entitled *Bheka-dhāraṇa* (reprinted in *Gauḍīya-patrikā* Year 6, No. 2):

"Properly understood, the word *bheka* means the *āśrama* of *bhikṣukas*, mendicants. The name of the *sannyāsa-āśrama* is *bhikṣu-āśrama*. *Sannyāsīs* can never associate with women in this life. They will sustain their lives by begging.

"Here a question arises: in which *āśrama* are those Vaiṣṇavas situated who have accepted *bheka*? Our studies of *śāstra* and the instructions of Mahāprabhu establish that detached Vaiṣṇavas are situated in the *bhikṣu-āśrama*. When the association of women is completely forbidden for them, then they are situated in the *sannyāsa-āśrama*. The sign of *sannyāsa* is *kaupīna*, the loin cloth. When they have accepted *ḍor-kaupīna* and the outer garment, then they are definitely accepted in the *sannyāsa-āśrama*.

"*Sannyāsa* is of two kinds: ordinary and Vaiṣṇava. There is a vast difference between these two. In ordinary *sannyāsa*, there is peacefulness, self-control, tolerance, renunciation, knowledge of the eternal and the temporary, and the ambition to attain *brahma*. When these *dharmas* have arisen in an individual, then *sannyāsa* has been accepted. However, the presence of these qualities does not by itself make one eligible for Vaiṣṇava *sannyāsa*.

"The process for developing love (*rati*) for Bhagavān begins first of all with faith in subject matters related to Bhagavān. After that one proceeds to *sādhu-saṅga*, *bhajana-kriyā*, *anartha-nivṛtti*, etc. When *rati* for Bhagavān arises in the heart, the *dharma* known as *virakti*, or detachment, takes shelter of the Vaiṣṇava. At that stage, the Vaiṣṇava *sādhaka* becomes completely detached from the *gṛhastha-āśrama*. He then wears the *kaupīna* to minimize his personal necessities, and maintains his life by begging. This is called Vaiṣṇava *bheka*. Those who are simple and free from duplicity and who accept *bheka* for the purpose of doing *bhagavad-bhajana* are worthy to receive the respect of the whole world.

"This type of acceptance of *bheka* is of two kinds. Some *sādhakas*, after achieving detachment born of *bhāva*, accept *bheka* from a worthy *guru*; and some put on *ḍor-kaupīna* and outer cloth themselves. In Śrīman Mahāprabhu's *sampradāya*, this custom of *bheka* is extremely pure. Bowing my head with great faith, I repeatedly offer my obeisances to such a tradition.

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"However, it is very unfortunate that these days the *bheka-āśrama* is becoming extremely degraded. Eligibility is a consideration that has completely disappeared. Some people who want to adopt *bheka*, although unqualified, shave their heads, put on *ḍor-kaupīna* and accept *bheka* whimsically.

"Presently some perversions have entered the system of *sannyāsa*:

(1) Some householder Vaiṣṇavas become *bābājīs*. They shave their heads and put on *kaupīna*. What can be more injurious than this? Their action is opposed to *śāstra* and to the interests of society. If they are actually detached from material life, then they may accept *bheka* in the genuine manner of renunciation. Otherwise they will disgrace *vaiṣṇava-dharma* and in the next life they will also have to taste the fruit of doing so.

(2) There is a terrible and disastrous custom among *bābājīs* of keeping maidservants in their *āśramas*. In some *āśramas*, a *bābājī* may even keep his former wife as his maid-servant. These people associate with women on the pretext of serving God and the *sādhus*.

(3) *Bābājīs* who are actually renounced completely reject lust for women, wealth, eatables and so on. Nowadays, common people are losing faith in Vaiṣṇavism, because they see supposedly renounced people indulging their selfish desires. The essence of the matter is that those who accept the symbols of renunciation without having developed genuine detachment which arises from *rati*, love of Bhagavān, are a disturbance in society and a disgrace to *vaiṣṇava-dharma*. Their own downfall and the defamation of *vaiṣṇava-dharma* are both guaranteed, having accepted *bheka* before they are qualified to do so."

After Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura and Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, a dark age began in Śrīman Mahāprabhu's Gauḍīya *sampradāya*, during which the current of *śrī rūpānuga-bhakti* became somewhat impaired. Various kinds of speculative malpractices and opinions opposed to *śuddha-bhakti* seeped into the true conception. At that time the situation became so dire that the educated and cultured section of society began to abhor even the name Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism, having witnessed the misconduct of its so-called followers. In this way, the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya* became distanced from the intelligentsia and respected society. At that time, the Seventh Gosvāmī Saccidānanda Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī appeared.

These two personalities brought about a revolutionary transformation in the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya* and restored its lost dignity. The entire credit for whatever diffusion of Śrīman Mahāprabhu's *nāma-saṅkīrtana* and *śuddha-bhakti* has taken place among the learned and respectable sector of society goes to these two *mahāpuruṣas* and their followers, not only in India but also throughout the world. They established Gauḍīya Maṭhas and preaching centres for *śuddha-bhakti* everywhere, and they published the literatures of *śuddha-bhakti* along with magazines and journals in all of the major languages of the world. Thus in a very short time they revolutionized the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava society.

After the disappearance of *jagad-guru* Śrīla Prabhupāda, improper practices again began to appear openly in all the prominent places of Śrī Vraja-maṇḍala, Gauḍa-maṇḍala and Kṣetra-maṇḍala. These groups of *bābājīs* began to make allegations against Śrīla Prabhupāda and the pure Vaiṣṇavas under his shelter. They said that

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Vaiṣṇavas of the Gauḍīya Maṭha are simply *jñānīs* ignorant of *rasa-tattva*, and that their acceptance of saffron cloth and *sannyāsa* is not a properly established procedure. Our most worshipful Śrīla Gurudeva refuted these accusations with scriptural evidence and powerful arguments and preached *śuddha-bhakti* everywhere. For this purpose he had the essays previously written by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and *jagad-guru* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda published again in his *Śrī Gauḍīya-patrikā* and *Śrī Bhāgavata-patrikā*. He published *Sahajiyā-dalana* (*Destroying the Sahajiyā Theory*), and also argued these points in huge assemblies in many places in Vraja-maṇḍala, Gauḍa-maṇḍala and Kṣetra-maṇḍala. As a result, the opposition party made a case to prosecute him in a court of law for loss of reputation. However, in the end they had to beg forgiveness in the same courtroom.

(2) Siddha-praṇālī

Siddha-praṇālī is very much misused nowadays in certain places in Vraja-maṇḍala, Gauḍa-maṇḍala and Kṣetra-maṇḍala. Sometimes, a man whose wife passes away is abused and even driven from his home. Although he is bereft of *tattva-jñāna* and unaware of *vaidhī-bhakti-sādhana*, he has his head shaved in the middle of the night, puts on *kaupīna* and quickly takes *siddha-praṇālī*. These days, *siddha-praṇālī* can be obtained very easily with the donation of half a rupee. Just before the *mantra* is given, a financial contract takes place. Those giving the *siddha-praṇālī mantra* think, "There can be no auspiciousness for *sādhakas* until they receive *siddha-praṇālī*. There is no necessity for *vaidhī-bhakti-sādhana*, *tattva-jñāna* or *anartha-nivṛtti*. The *rāgānuga-bhakta* should obtain *siddha-praṇālī* before he goes through *anartha-nivṛtti*. In that way he can avoid getting caught in the inconvenience of *vaidhī-bhakti*." These people's conception is exactly like thinking that a fruit will grow from a leaf before the appearance of a flower.

About fifty-five years ago, we were performing Vraja-maṇḍala *parikramā* with our most worshipful Śrīla Gurudeva. Approximately four hundred pilgrims attending the *parikramā* were staying in a large *dharmaśālā* in Mathurā. Gurudeva had organized a big feast there, to which all the local *sādhus*, saints and Vaiṣṇavas had been invited. *Bābājīs*, who had accepted *bheka*, also assembled there in very large numbers. When they came to meet with Śrīla Gurudeva, he became very curious and asked them, "What is the aim and object of your *kṛṣṇa-bhajana*?" They were taken aback when they heard this question, but after thinking about it they answered, "By performing *kṛṣṇa-bhajana* we will attain liberation and merge into Kṛṣṇa." When Gurujī heard their answer, he became very sad. On questioning them further, he found that women were also staying in their *āśramas* as maidservants. From that day on, he vowed to reform these malpractices which had spread in the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava society. I have indicated this before. In spite of being busy in preaching *śuddha-bhakti* throughout his life, he never forgot this matter. A great deal of credit for the improvement and reform of this situation goes to this *mahāpuruṣa*. Here I am presenting whatever views I have heard from him on this subject.

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī (*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.4.15–16) has defined the following sequence which we have to follow in order to enter into the realm of *bhakti*:

ādau śraddhā tataḥ sādhu-
saṅgo 'tha bhajana-kriyā
tato 'nartha-nivṛttiḥ syāt
tato niṣṭhā rucis tataḥ

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athāsaktis tato bhāvas
tataḥ premābhyudañcati
sādhakānām ayaṁ premṇaḥ
prādurbhāve bhavet kramaḥ

Bhakti flees very far away when the *sādhaka* transgresses this sequence. Therefore, it is absolutely essential to execute the first limb of *sādhana-bhakti*, namely, *vaidhī-bhakti*, or regulative devotional service, in order to enter the realm of *prema*. *Vaidhī-bhakti* is not directly the cause of attaining *kṛṣṇa-prema*. Still, it is necessary to observe the appropriate limbs of *vaidhī-bhakti* in order to enter into *rāga-mārga*. *Vaidhī-bhakti* is established on the steadfast foundation of scriptural evidence and it is endowed with powerful codes of correct behaviour. Moreover, there is no particular difference between the observance of the limbs of *rāgānuga-sādhana-bhakti* and *vaidhī-bhakti*. The difference is only in devotion to the observance. Thus the limbs of *vaidhī-bhakti-sādhana* cannot be neglected entirely. When Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu instructed Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī on the subject of *prayojana-tattva*, which is *kṛṣṇa-prema*, He said:

kona bhagye kona jīvera 'śraddhā' yadi haya
tabe sei jīva 'sādhu-saṅga' karaya

sādhu-saṅga haite haya 'sravaṇa-kīrtana'
sādhana-bhaktye haya 'sarvānartha-nivartana'

anartha-nivṛtti haile bhakti 'niṣṭhā' haya
niṣṭhā haite śravaṇādye 'ruci' upajaya

ruci haite bhakti haya 'āsakti' pracura
āsakti haite citte janme kṛṣṇe prity-aṅkura

sei 'rati' gāḍha haile dhare 'prema'-nāma
sei premā—'prayojana' sarvānanda-dhāma

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta
(*Madhya-līlā* 23.9–13)

If by good fortune a *jīva* develops *śraddhā*, he begins to associate with *sādhus*, and in that company he engages in hearing and chanting. By following *sādhana-bhakti* he becomes free from all *anarthas* and advances with firm faith (*niṣṭhā*), by which *ruci* (taste) awakens for *śravaṇa*, *kīrtana* and so on. After *ruci*, then *āsakti* (deep attachment) arises, and from abundant *āsakti* the seed of *prīti* (affection) for Kṛṣṇa is born in the heart. When that emotion intensifies, it is called *prema*. This *prema* is life's ultimate goal and the abode of all joy.

It is quite impossible for one who transgresses this sequence to enter the realm of *bhakti*. Thus, those who want to enter this domain while neglecting the limbs of *vaidhī-sādhana-bhakti* are in all respects unrestrained and outside the conclusions of *śāstra*. They have no relation at all with pure *bhakti*. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has also expressed the same opinion: *"vidhi-mārga-rata-jane svādhīnatā-ratna-dāne / rāga-mārga karāna praveśa* – Śrī Kṛṣṇa bestows the jewel of independence upon those who are devoted to the regulative path, thus allowing them entrance into *rāga-mārga*, the path of spontaneous loving service."

By considering the gradations of the object of attainment (*sādhya-vastu*) we find that the *prema* of Śrīmatī Rādhā for Kṛṣṇa is the crest jewel. Furthermore, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has explained that the *sādhya* for the living entities is service to Śrīmatī Rādhikā (*rādhā-dāsya*) imbued with *parakīya-bhāva*. In order to obtain that *sādhya-vastu*, one must perform *sādhana*.

'sādhya-vastu' 'sādhana'-vinā keha nāhi pāya
kṛpā kari' kaha, rāya, pābāra upāya

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta
(*Madhya-līlā* 8.197)

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The goal of life (*sādhya-vastu*) cannot be achieved unless one accepts the appropriate process (*sādhana*). Now, being merciful upon Me, please explain that means by which this goal can be attained.

Śrī Rāya Rāmānanda replied:

rādhā-kṛṣṇera līlā ei ati gūḍhatara
dāsya-vātsalyādi-bhāve nā haya gocara

sabe eka sakhī-gaṇera ihāṅ ādhikāra
sakhī haite haya ei līlāra vistāra

sakhī binā ei līlā puṣṭa nāhi haya
sakhī līlā vistāriyā, sakhī āsvādaya

sakhī binā ei līlāya anyera nāhi gati
sakhī-bhāve ye tāṅre kare anugati

rādhā-kṛṣṇa-kuñjasevā sādhya sei pāya
sei sādhya pāite āra nāhika upāya

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta
(*Madhya-līlā* 8. 201–205)

ataeva gopī-bhāva kari' aṅgīkāra
rātri-dina cinte rādhā-kṛṣṇera vihāra

siddha-dehe cinti' kare tāhāṅñi sevana
sakhī-bhāve pāya rādhā-kṛṣṇera caraṇa

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta
(*Madhya-līlā* 8.228–229)

The gist of the matter is that Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's love-laden *līlā* is so confidential and so full of mysteries that it is imperceptible, even for those in *dāsya-* and *vātsalya-bhāva*. Only the *sakhīs* are eligible for this. Therefore, no one can attain the service of Śrīmatī Rādhikā or the *kuñja-sevā* of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Yugala by *sādhana* without following in the wake of the *sakhīs*. Thus the only means of attaining this supreme goal is meditation on Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's pastimes throughout the day and night by the internally conceived *siddha-deha* and in the mood of the *sakhīs*. For this reason, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has given this instruction in his *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.2.293–295) in the section on *śrī rāgānuga-bhakti-sādhana*:

kṛṣṇaṁ smaran janaṁ cāsya
preṣṭhaṁ nija-samīhitam
tat-tat-kathā-rataś cāsau
kuryād vāsaṁ vraje sadā

sevā sādhaka-rūpeṇa
siddha-rūpeṇa cātra hi
tad-bhāva-lipsunā kāryā
vraja-lokānusārataḥ

śravaṇot-kīrtanādīni
vaidha-bhakty uditāni tu
yānyaṅgāni ca tānyatra
vijñeyāni manīṣibhiḥ

Here, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has mentioned two types of *sādhana* in *rāgānuga-bhakti sevā*:

sevā sādhaka-rūpeṇa
siddha-rūpeṇa cātra hi
tad-bhāva-lipsunā kāryā
vraja-lokānusārataḥ

When there is *lobha*, or greed, for *rāgātmika-bhakti*, *rāgānuga-bhakti* is executed in two ways: in the external body in which one is presently situated (*sādhaka-rūpa*), and in the perfected spiritual form (*siddha-rūpa*). Eagerly desiring to attain *rati* for Kṛṣṇa or the ecstatic sentiments of one's chosen companions of Kṛṣṇa, one must follow the associates of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in Vraja, such as Lalitā, Viśākhā, Rūpa Mañjarī and their followers, such as Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī and Sanātana Gosvāmī. One must render bodily service with the *sādhaka-rūpa* following the great authorities residing in Vraja, such as Śrī Rūpa and Śrī Sanātana. And with the *siddha-rūpa* one must

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render *mānasī-sevā* following the Vrajavāsīs such as Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī. The meaning of this verse (*sevā sādhaka-rūpeṇa*) has been explained in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Madhya-līlā* 22.156–157):

bāhya, antara,—ihāra dui ta' sādhana
'bāhye' sādhaka-dehe kare śravaṇa-kīrtana

'mane' nija-siddha-deha kariyā bhāvana
rātri-dine kare vraje kṛṣṇera sevana

This *rāgānuga-bhakti* is performed in two ways: externally and internally. Externally, in the *sādhaka* body, the devotee engages in hearing and chanting. In his mind, in his internally conceived, perfected spiritual body, he serves Kṛṣṇa in Vraja day and night.

Thus *rāgānuga-bhakti sādhakas* should in all respects practise *bhāva-sambandhi-sādhana* such as *śravaṇa, kīrtana,* service to Tulasī, wearing *tilaka,* observing vows beginning with Śrī Ekādaśī and Janmāṣṭamī, and so on, for all these activities nourish one's intrinsic desired *bhāva.* Simultaneously, one must also render service to Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa in Vraja, meditating on one's *siddha-deha* in the heart. The body of a *gopī* which is suitable for rendering service to Rādhā-Govinda is called *siddha-deha.* When *bhajana* is mature, the *jīva* gives up his inert material body, and attains the body of a *gopī* corresponding to his eternal intrinsic nature.

In *Śrī Prema-bhakti-candrikā* Śrīla Narottama Ṭhākura has said: "*sādhane bhābiba jāhā siddha-dehe pāba tāhā, rāga pathera ei se upāya* – whatever subject is constantly meditated upon at the time of performing *sādhana,* that same subject is the prominent meditation at the time of death and it engrosses the heart." One's destination at the time of death will correspond exactly to the subject one remembers at that time. At the time of death, the saintly King Bhārata was immersed in thinking about a baby deer, and therefore he attained the body of a deer, so what doubt is there about attaining a body suitable for rendering to the Divine Couple the service on which one constantly reflected in one's internally conceived *siddha-deha*?

In relation to the *siddha-deha* it has been said in the *Śrī Sanatkumāra-saṁhitā* (184, 186):

ātmānaṁ cintayet tatra
tāsāṁ madhye manoramām
rūpa-yauvana-sampannāṁ
kiśorīṁ pramadākṛtim

rādhikānucarīṁ nityaṁ
tat-sevana-parāyaṇām
kṛṣṇād apy adhikaṁ prema
rādhikāyāṁ prakurvatīm

(Sadāśiva is explaining to Nāradajī about the *siddha-deha* suitable for rendering service to the Divine Couple.) "O Nārada, meditate in this way upon your own *svarūpa* among Śrī Kṛṣṇa's beloved associates who take pride in being His paramours in the *aprākṛta* Vṛndāvana-dhāma. 'I am a most beautiful and supremely blissful *kiśorī,* an adolescent girl, endowed with youthful beauty. I am an eternal maidservant of Śrīmatī Rādhikā. Having arranged for Śrī Kṛṣṇa's dear-most sweetheart, Śrīmatī Rādhikā, to meet with Him, I will always strive for Their happiness. Remaining forever engaged in the service of the Divine Couple, may I maintain more love for Śrīmatī than for Kṛṣṇa.'"

We should note here that the descriptions of the *siddha-deha* that *śāstra* and the *mahājanas* have given are for *sādhakas* of a particular level. Any mention of the *siddha-deha* is always in the

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context of *rāgānuga-bhakti*. Specifically, such instructions are intended for those very fortunate *sādhakas* in whose hearts *lobha*, a genuine greed, to attain *rāgātmika-bhakti*, has already arisen due to impressions (*saṁskāras*) from this life and previous lives.

There is a further matter to consider. It is one thing to understand the excellence of a particular *rasa* by the description given in *śāstra*. It is another thing altogether to have greed (*lobha*) for that *rasa*. When someone has *lobha* for a particular *rasa*, that *sādhaka* will exhibit its symptoms. Such a greed arises in the stage of *ruci*, and this marks the beginning of the practice of *rāgānuga-bhakti*. It is understood from this that *nāmāparādha*, *sevāparādha* and various other *anarthas* of such a *sādhaka* have, for the most part, been eradicated by now. He has already controlled the six urges mentioned by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī in *Śrī Upadeśāmṛta* (Verse 1); he is virtually free from the six faults (Verse 2); he is endowed with the six qualities beginning with enthusiasm and confidence (Verse 3); having recognized the three types of Vaiṣṇavas, he is expert in behaving appropriately with them (Verse 5); and he has also become established in the purport of Verse 8, *tan-nāma-rūpa-caritādi*. In other words, he conducts himself according to this verse.

In this stage the *sādhaka* goes on performing *bhajana*, and when he crosses the stage of *ruci* and enters *āsakti*, then a semblance of the symptoms related by Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī in the verse *kṣāntir-avyartha-kālatvam* will be observed in him. In the stage of *āsakti*, a semblance (*ābhāsa*) of the *rati* that arises at the stage of *bhāva* will appear, and in order to manifest that *rati* fully, the *sādhaka* will perform *bhajana*, meditating on his *siddha-deha*. When this *ratyābhāsa* transforms into *rati* by the practice of *bhajana*, then the *sādhaka* attains factual experience of his own *svarūpa*. This is called meditation on one's *siddha-deha*, or the acceptance of Vaiṣṇava *bheka*. One who achieves this, being of simple heart, is worshipful for the whole world.

There are two types of acceptance of *bheka*. A *sādhaka* may receive *bheka* from a suitable *guru*. Alternatively, when genuine *vairāgya* arises as mentioned previously, he may accept *bheka* from himself. Haridāsa Ṭhākura, the six Gosvāmīs, Lokanātha Gosvāmī and others are examples of the practice of accepting *bheka* from oneself. This is also how Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura accepted *sannyāsa-veśa* after the disappearance of Śrīla Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī, from whom he had received *dīkṣā-mantra*s. We see from these examples that acceptance of *bheka* in this way is fully in agreement with *śāstra*. Śrī Rāmānujācārya also conferred *tridaṇḍi-sannyāsa* upon himself after the disappearance of his *guru*, Śrīla Yamunācārya.

In any case, the meditation on one's *siddha-deha* depends on the mercy of *guru*. The *guru* or *śikṣā-guru* who is established in the principles of transcendental mellows (*rasa-vicāra*) and who is self-realized will indicate the details of the *sādhaka's* perfected form. Otherwise, if the *sādhaka* changes the order of the sequence described earlier, he cannot attain perfection. On the contrary, his *bhakti* may become completely ruined and the conceptions of the *sampradāya* will also become corrupted. We see this going on everywhere nowadays.

Some ignorant people say that there is no *siddha-praṇālī* in the Gauḍīya Maṭha. This vicious propaganda is erroneous in all respects. In the authentic texts written by Śrīla Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī entitled *Sat-kriyā-sāra-dīpikā* and

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Saṁskāra-dīpikā, which is a supplement to *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*, there is an account of the *tridaṇḍi-sannyāsa-saṁskāra*. The original manuscript handwritten by Śrī Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī is protected even today in the Royal Library of Jaipura, and the *gosvāmīs* of Śrī Rādhā-Ramaṇa still have an old copy of it. Therefore, *Sat-kriyā-sāra-dīpikā* and *Saṁskāra-dīpikā* are accepted as authoritative evidence, and according to them, the conferring of *tridaṇḍi-sannyāsa-veśa* by Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas is bona fide. In this *sannyāsa-saṁskāra*, *ḍor-kaupīna*, *bahir-vāsa* and the *sannyāsa-mantra* for taking shelter of *gopī-bhāva* are given. The *ekādaśa-bhāva* (eleven aspects of *gopī* identity), namely, *sambandha*, *vayaḥ*, *nāma*, *rūpa*, *yūtha*, *veśa*, *ājñā*, *vāsa*, *sevā*, *parākāṣṭā-śvāsa* and *pālya-dāsī-bhāva*, are contained within this *gopī-bhāva*. The identity of the *siddha-deha* is determined by the instructions of *śrī guru* in accordance with the *ruci* (taste) of the *sādhaka*. One's own eleven identifications (*ekādaśa-bhāva*) given by *guru* is called *siddha-praṇālī*. As the *sādhaka* goes on performing this type of *sādhana*, the perfection of his *svarūpa* takes place along with the attainment of *śuddha-rati* in his heart.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has described his eternal spiritual form in one of his songs (*Gīta-mālā*, Chapter 5, Song 8):

varaṇe taḍit vāsa tārāvalī
kamala mañjarī nāma
sāḍhe bāra varṣa vayasa satata
svānanda-sukhada-dhāma

karpūra-sevā lalitāra gaṇa
rādhā yūtheśvarī hana
mameśvarī-nātha śrī nanda-nandana
āmāra parāṇa dhana

śrī rūpa mañjarī prabhṛtira sama
yugala sevāya āśā
avaśya se-rūpa sevā pāba āmi
parākāṣṭhā suviśvāsa

kabe vā e dāsī saṁsiddhi labhibe
rādhā-kuṇḍe vāsa kari'
rādhā-kṛṣṇa-sevā satata karibe
pūrva smṛti parihari'

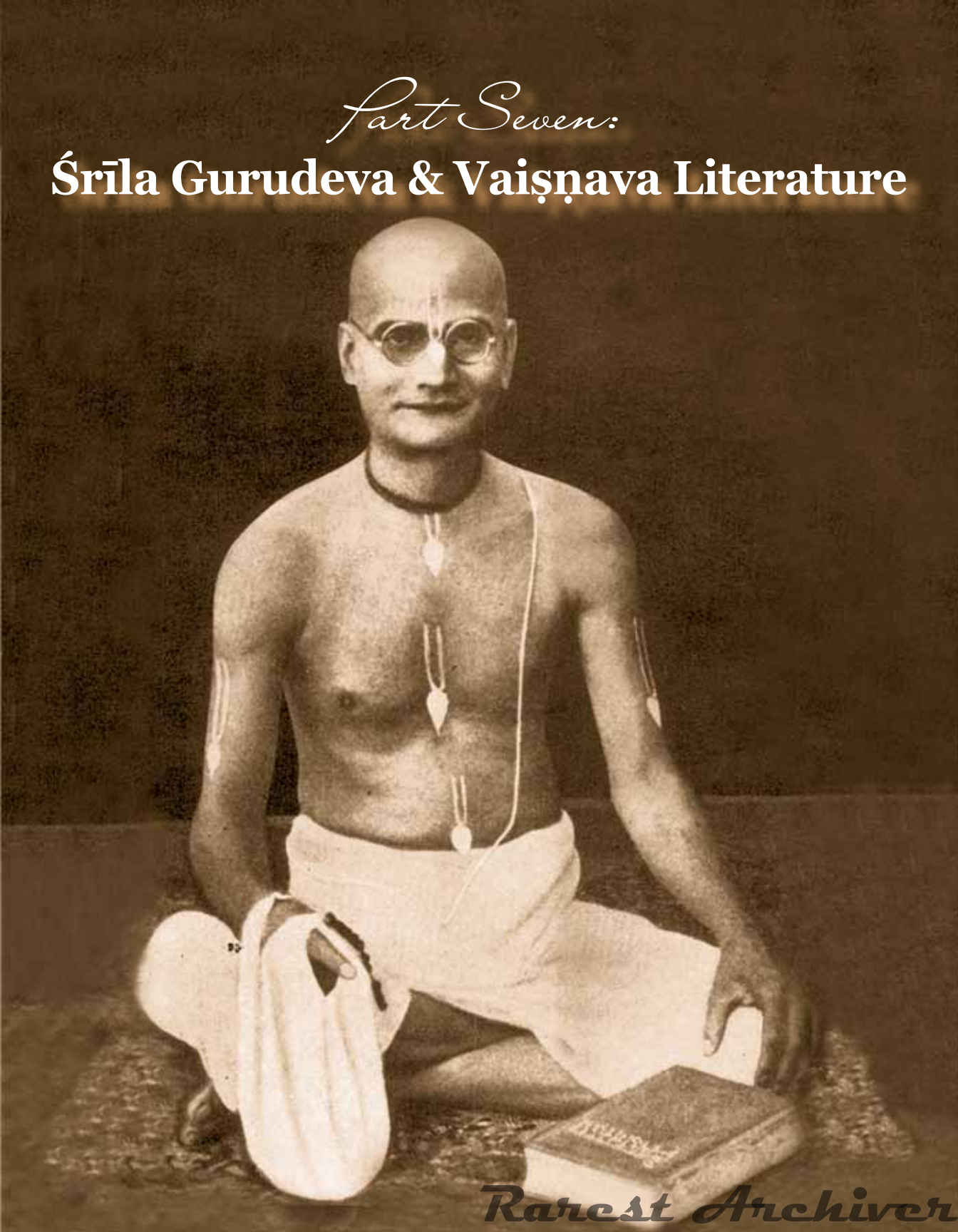
My complexion is like a flash of lightning and my dress is bedecked with twinkling stars. My name is Kamala Mañjarī and I am eternally twelve-and-a-half years old. My home is Svānanda-sukhada-kuñja. My service is to supply camphor to the Divine Couple. I serve in Lalitā's group (*gaṇa*) and Śrī Rādhā is my group leader (*yūtheśvarī*). My Svāminī's beloved, the son of Nanda Mahārāja, is the treasure of my life. I aspire to serve the Divine Couple like Rūpa Mañjarī and others, and I am confident that I will surely attain this service. This is my highest aspiration. Oh, when will this maidservant attain complete perfection and, residing at Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa, serve Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, having completely forgotten my past?

In conclusion, whatever custom of accepting *bheka* is seen among *bābājīs* is not a fifth *āśrama*, rather it is a second form of the fourth *āśrama*, namely the *sannyāsa-āśrama*.

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Part Seven:

Śrīla Gurudeva & Vaiṣṇava Literature



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Paramārādhyatama Śrīla Gurudeva was endowed with the opulence of being exceptionally brilliant in all spheres. No one could equal him in organizing an ideal society, and at the same time he was also uniquely attached to transcendental knowledge. He was a mature and profound scholar of philosophy, *rasika* and also a poet. It is very rare to find a person who is so extremely talented in such diverse fields. He had the gift of astonishing everyone with his ever-fresh thoughts and feelings, and it was a natural part of his life to compose Vaiṣṇava texts presenting fresh philosophical conclusions and realizations. He enriched the treasure house of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava literature, not only by publishing the authentic compositions of previous *ācāryas*, but also by personally composing new books, articles, essays, prayers and poems which were full of *siddhānta*. We will herein present an appreciation of a few of his prayers, essays and sweet poems.

'The Life History of Māyāvāda, or the Victory of Vaiṣṇavism'

Paramārādhya Śrīla Ācārya Kesarī considered that pure *bhakti* cannot be propagated completely as long as the conception of *māyāvāda* exists in the world. It is therefore most essential to uproot *māyāvāda*. For this reason he composed a book entitled *The Life History of Māyāvāda, or the Victory of Vaiṣṇavism*. Here is a brief account of the essence of this book.

(1) What is māyāvāda?

The word *māyā* – generally indicating the potency of inert matter (*jaḍa-śakti*) or the potency of nescience (*avidyā-śakti*) – is the shadow of the internal potency (*svarūpa-śakti*) of the Supreme Truth. She [*māyā*] is the authority who presides over the material world. It is this very potency that leads a materially bound living entity to identify himself with the physical body, to consider the objects connected with the body to be his own, and to accept the shelter of *māyāvāda*.

Māyāvāda states that *brahma* is an undifferentiated, or homogeneous, spirit that is devoid of any potency or attributes. From this point of view, then, a distinct *māyā* potency with the characteristic function of creating illusion cannot exist. However, *māyāvādīs* also assert that the *jīva* is actually *brahma*, and that the apparent existence of the living entity separate from *brahma* is simply an illusion that is created by the influence of *māyā*, or *avidyā*. As long as *māyā* exists, the *jīva* will exist. In this respect, *māyāvādīs* consider that the *māyā* potency does exist. According to the *māyāvāda* doctrine, then, *māyā* (ignorance or illusion) has the specific, distinguishing characteristic of being neither

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existing (*sat*) nor non-existing (*asat*), and is therefore inexpressible (*sat-asat-vilakṣaṇa anirvacanīya*). People who hold this deceptive opinion are *māyāvādīs*, or impersonalists. According to the *māyāvāda* conception, Īśvara, like the *jīva*, is also in the clutches of *māyā*. However, the difference between Īśvara and the living entity is that the *jīvas* are forced to accept the fruits of their actions, whereas Īśvara covered by *māyā* does not. Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* have pointed out that this idea is contrary both to *śāstra* and to logic.

The author of *Vedānta-sūtra*, the omniscient Śrī Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vedavyāsa, who divided the Vedas, has declared in his *Padma Purāṇa* that *māyāvāda* is false and against the Vedas:

māyāvādam asat-śāstraṁ
pracchannaṁ bauddham ucyate

Māyāvāda is a concocted doctrine and is known as Buddhism in disguise.

vedārthavan mahā-śāstraṁ
māyāvādam avaidikam
mayaiva vihitaṁ devi!
jagatāṁ nāśa-kāraṇāt

Māyāvāda, though given a facade of great importance and claiming itself to be derived from the Vedas, is in truth a non-Vedic theory. O goddess, it is I who has propagated this concocted theory, which will become the cause of the world's destruction.

svāgamaiḥ kalpitais tvaṁ ca
janān mad-vimukhān kuru
māṁ ca gopaya yena
syāt sṛṣṭir eṣottarottarā

Padma Purāṇa
(*Uttara-khaṇḍa* 71.107)

[Lord Viṣṇu said to Śiva,] O Śiva, make people in general averse to Me by concocting your own version of scripture and thus hiding My glories. In this way, the world's population bereft of spiritual knowledge will increase.

Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* such as Śrī Rāmānuja Ācārya, Śrī Madhva Ācārya, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī, Śrī Vallabha Ācārya, Śrī Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī and Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa have pointed out that Śaṅkara Ācārya is a hidden Buddhist and that his doctrine is covered Buddhism. Some scholars of the Śaṅkara *sampradāya* think that Vaiṣṇavas only say this out of envy, but in this they are mistaken. Many scholars who are not Vaiṣṇavas have also accepted that Śaṅkara nurtured the flow of the Buddhist conception. These scholars include Vijñāna Bhikṣu, who was a prominent scholar of Sāṅkhya philosophy; learned *yogīs* of the Patañjalī doctrine; and even Buddhist scholars. Now we will show the similarities between the views of Ācārya Śaṅkara and Buddha.

(2) Is this world false?

Buddha stated that the world is *śūnya-tattva*, void or non-existent, in all the three phases of time – the beginning, middle and end. By this, the world's falsehood in the three phases of time is ascertained.

Ācārya Śaṅkara also taught that the cause of the world is a principle called *avidyā*, or ignorance, which is devoid of past, present and future. This principle of ignorance is inexpressible due to its special characteristic of being neither existent nor non-existent. "*Brahma satyaṁ jagan mithyā – brahma* is real and the world is false."

"*Nidrā mohāt svapnavat tan na satyaṁ śuddhaḥ pūrṇo nitya ekaḥ śivo 'ham* – The universe is not true, it is non-existent and false

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Buddha



Ācārya Śaṅkara

"It is clear that Buddha's *śūnya* and Ācārya Śaṅkara's dream-like *mithyā* (falsehood) are both one and the same. Only the terminology is different."

like a dream. The universe only seems real while we are asleep in a dream state; in reality it does not exist" (*Ātma-pañcaka* 3).

It is clear that Buddha's *śūnya* and Ācārya Śaṅkara's dream-like *mithyā* (falsehood) are both one and the same. Only the terminology is different. There is no difference between Buddha's *trikāla-śūnyatva*, voidism in the three phases of time, and Ācārya Śaṅkara's inexpressible principle of existence and non-existence.

(3) The means of liberation

Many scriptures of the Mahāyāna branch of Buddhism have said that the only means of achieving liberation is *prajñā-pāramitā*, or 'the perfection of wisdom'. Buddhism teaches that one should understand that this whole world is a source of grief and is full of sorrows, and to attain complete relief from this suffering, one should try to obtain *tattva-jñāna*. The name of this *tattva-jñāna* is *prajñā-pāramitā*.

Ācārya Śaṅkara also says that, although the world is false, it is still the source of suffering, and is filled with intense misery. The condition of complete freedom from the grief of this distressful world is called *mokṣa*, or liberation. The cause of this liberation from material existence is knowledge of the oneness of *brahma* and *jīva*, and of *brahma* and this illusory existence. This

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knowledge is *tattva-jñāna*, and without it one cannot attain the perfection of oneness. *Tattva-jñāna*, or *brahma-jñāna* (knowledge of *brahma*), is the only cause of the complete annihilation of *avidyā*.

When we examine both opinions, we see that Buddha's *prajñā* (wisdom) and Ācārya Śaṅkara's *brahma-jñāna* are identical; there is no real difference between them at all. We can verify this with the observation that Ācārya Śaṅkara, having quoted the *mantra* '*prajñānaṁ brahma*' from *Aitareya Upaniṣad* (3.3), has consistently supported the opinion of the Mahāyāna branch of Buddhism with regard to *prajñā-pāramitā*. In this way, Ācārya Śaṅkara has propagated *tattva-jñāna* (*brahma-jīva aikyavāda*, or the theory that *brahma* and the *jīva* are one), by following in the footsteps of Buddha's doctrine, *prajñā*, or *prajñā-pāramitā*.

There is no difference between Buddha's *śūnya* and Śaṅkara's *brahma*. In the nineteenth verse of the Buddhists' *Prajñā-pāramitā-sūtra*, in relation to supreme liberation in the form of *śūnya-tattva*, it has been written: *śaktaḥ kastvām iha stotuṁ nirṇimittāṁ niraṅjanām / sarva-vāg viṣayātītāṁ yā tvaṁ kvacidaniśritā*. It is clear from this verse that *śūnya-tattva* is untainted, causeless, unborn, non-existent, without any support and inexpressible through speech. It is unimpeded, imperishable and also immeasurable. These are the specific symptoms of *śūnya-tattva*. Śaṅkara, for his part, states that *brahma* is spotless and formless and without variety, potency and distinct qualities. It is clear, then, that there is no difference between Śaṅkara's *brahma-tattva* and Buddha's *śūnya-tattva*. Śaṅkara Ācārya himself has actually referred to *brahma* as *śūnya*.

draṣṭṛ-darśana-dṛśyādi bhāva-śūnyaika vastuni
nirvikāre nirākāre nirviśeṣe bhidā kutaḥ

Viveka-cūḍāmaṇi (402)

Is there a distinction between the viewer, vision and the object of vision in relation to the immutable, formless substance devoid of attributes? (In other words, there is no distinction.)

nityo 'haṁ nirvadyo 'haṁ
nirākāro 'ham akṣaraḥ
paramānanda rūpo 'ham
aham evāham avyayaḥ

Brahma-nāmāvalī-mālā (4)

I am eternal, flawless, formless, imperishable, supremely blissful and inexhaustible.

In the book *Amara-koṣa*, Buddha has been called an *advaya-vādī*, non-dualist. The followers of Śaṅkara Ācārya also introduce themselves as *kevalādvaita-vādīs*, pure non-dualists, so there is agreement between the two on this point as well. Readers can judge for themselves whether or not there is any difference of opinion between Śaṅkara and Buddha.

Although there is no specific difference between *advaya-vāda* and *advaita-vāda*, Ācārya Śaṅkara still named his doctrine *advaita-vāda* and not *advaya-vāda* (Buddhism). Why did he conceal this truth when he was fully aware in the core of his heart that he was a Buddhist? The reason for this was not a philosophical difference. The real cause was the order of his worshipful Lord, Śrī Bhagavān. *Śaṅkaraḥ śaṅkaraḥ sākśāt*. Ācārya Śaṅkara is the direct incarnation of Śaṅkara, who is the most exalted Vaiṣṇava and dear devotee of the Lord. Indeed, Śaṅkara is regarded as the *guru* of the Vaiṣṇavas.

At the time when Ācārya Śaṅkara made his appearance in India, the general mass of people were deviating from the principles of *varṇāśrama* because of the influence of the Buddhist *śūnya-*

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"He transformed *śūnya-vāda* into *brahma-vāda* and re-established the honour and authority of the Vedas. .... Establishing the false doctrine of *brahma-vāda* on the foundation of Vedic authority was only a temporary achievement. Later, Śrī Rāmānuja Ācārya, Śrī Madhva and other Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* erected the palace of Vaiṣṇavism on the foundation of Śaṅkara Ācārya's *brahma-vāda*."

vāda. Even the brahminical class of men were rejecting Vedic *dharma* in favour of Buddhism. At that time, Lord Śaṅkara incarnated as Śaṅkara Ācārya, who was endowed with extraordinary powers. He transformed *śūnya-vāda* into *brahma-vāda* and re-established the honour and authority of the Vedas. India will remain eternally indebted to Śrī Śaṅkara Ācārya for accomplishing this extraordinary task. Establishing the false doctrine of *brahma-vāda* on the foundation of Vedic authority was only a temporary achievement. Later, Śrī Rāmānuja Ācārya, Śrī Madhva and other Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* erected the palace of Vaiṣṇavism on the foundation of Śaṅkara Ācārya's *brahma-vāda*. We have already mentioned Bhagavān's orders to Śrī Śaṅkara. Bhagavān Viṣṇu said to Śrī Rudra (*Padma Purāṇa*): "*māṁ ca gopaya yena syāt sṛṣṭir eṣottarottarā* – cover Me in such a way that people will take more interest in advancing material civilization just to propagate a population bereft of spiritual knowledge."

(4) The history of māyāvāda

Śrīla Ācārya Kesarī researched the history of impersonalism from Satya-yuga to the present age of Kali, and has given us a bird's-eye view of *māyāvāda*. Scholars of philosophy have concluded that Ācārya Śaṅkara's *nirviśeṣa kevalādvaita-vāda*, non-variegated exclusive monism, is not the same as the *advaita-vāda* which was current prior to his time. On the contrary, the *advaita-vāda* prior to Ācārya Śaṅkara is Vedic, for we find it described in the Vedas and Upaniṣads. The Vedic literature states that the Supreme Truth as defined by the Upaniṣads (*aupaniṣadika brahma*) is neither without potency nor devoid of transcendental attributes. They also state that the world is perishable but not false. Śukadeva Gosvāmī and the four Kumāras, led by Sanaka and Sanātana, were fixed in meditation on this *nirguṇa-brahma* (the Supreme Truth devoid of qualities). However, this *brahma* was not an inexpressible principle with the special characteristic of being both existent and non-existent. Later, by the mercy of pure Vaiṣṇavas, they were established in pure *bhakti*.

The *jñāna-yoga* of the four Kumāras was somewhat unfavourable to pure *bhakti*, so their father Brahmā pleaded with Śrī Bhagavān, who advented in the form of a swan and instructed them in the process of *bhakti-yoga*. This narration is found in the Seventh Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī, an adherent of the unqualified Supreme Truth, entered into the realm of pure *bhakti* by the mercy of Śrī Vedavyāsa, an empowered incarnation of Bhagavān (a *śaktyāveśa-avatāra*). Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī has himself admitted this fact in the First Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

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(5) Advaita-vāda in Satya-yuga

In his commentary on *Brahma-sūtra* 3.2.17, Śrī Śaṅkara Ācārya has accepted as evidence the dialogue between Bādhva and Vāskali. Bādhva was the *guru* of Vāskali, who was a famous *advaita-vādī* during Satya-yuga. Vāskali was the son of Anuhlāda, who was a son of Hiraṇyakaśipu; Vāskali, like Hiraṇyakaśipu, was by nature a ferocious demon. There are many such examples in the history of impersonalism in different *yugas*. All the great demons were either *advaita-vādīs* or *māyāvādīs*. This proves that the impersonal conception is especially honoured in the dynasty of demons. Impartial and soft-hearted sages who took to *advaita-vāda* were saved from the devouring mouth of *māyāvāda*, and their hearts were purified by the mercy received from the incarnations of Bhagavān. But stone-hearted demons, whose fanatical, blind faith in conceptions opposed to the *śāstras*, could not receive *bhakti-tattva*. Therefore, incarnations of Bhagavān destroyed these demons to safeguard the dignity of *bhakti*. Śrī Vāmanadeva appeared in the evil sacrifice of Vāskali, or Vāskala, and delivered him.

(6) The evolution of nirviśeṣa advaita-vāda in Treta-yuga

Vaśiṣṭha

Śrī Vaśiṣṭha Muni was the main *ācārya* of *advaita-vāda* in Treta-yuga. He was the family priest of the kings belonging to the sun-dynasty (*sūrya-vaṁśa*), and he was also a *brahma-jñānī*. No one disputes this fact, and his *Yogavāśiṣṭha Rāmāyaṇa* is irrefutable evidence. As a *brahma-vādī*, he used to impart knowledge of the undivided *brahma* to his disciples. Bhagavān Śrī Rāmacandra felt great pain on seeing His family priest wandering in the desolate forest of *brahma-vāda*, so He mercifully rescued him. Vaśiṣṭha Muni then offered himself in the service of Śrī Rāmacandra.

> "There are many such examples in the history of impersonalism in different *yugas*. All the great demons were either *advaita-vādīs* or *māyāvādīs*. This proves that the impersonal conception is especially honoured in the dynasty of demons."

Rāvaṇa

Daśānana Rāvaṇa was the chief of the *rākṣasa* dynasty, and was the son of Viśravā Ṛṣi, who was the son of Pulastya Ṛṣi. Viśravā Ṛṣi left his place of residence in Brahma-varta and stayed for some time in Laṅkā, where he married the daughter of a *rākṣasa*. Rāvaṇa took birth from the womb of this demon's daughter, and was thus half *ṛṣi* and half *rākṣasa*. He can be called an *advaita-vādī*, for prominent philosophers in Ācārya Śaṅkara's line accept him as the first commentator on monistic *advaita-siddhānta*. The Buddhist *sampradāya's Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra* also states that Rāvaṇa was a well-known *advaita-vādī* and *śūnya-vādī ṛṣi*.

The *māyāvādīs* want to rob *brahma* of His potency in order to establish that the Supreme Truth is powerless. Rāvaṇa tried to steal away Sītā-devī, the eternal potency of *para-brahma* Śrī Rāmacandra. For this offence, the great devotee Hanumān delivered the powerful punch of *bhakti-siddhānta* to Rāvaṇa's heart. This

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vanquished his *advaita-jñāna*; consequently he fainted and fell to the ground. Śrī Rāmacandra then used the unerring arrow of *veda-dhvani*, the sound of the Vedas, to cut off Rāvaṇa's ten heads, which signify the ten principles of *nirvāṇa*. This is the significance of the deliverance of Rāvaṇa.

(7) Advaita-vāda and its transformations in Dvāpara-yuga

Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī

Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī was the son of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vedavyāsa and Vīṭikā-devī, the daughter of Javāli Ṛṣi. Śukadeva stayed in his mother's womb for twelve years until, on the request of his father, he relieved his mother's pain and came out as a liberated soul. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa* have narrated the story of Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī's birth in detail. From birth he was fixed in *nirguṇa-brahma*. However, by the mercy of the *śaktyāveśa-avatāra* Śrīla Vedavyāsa, he became a great *rasika* and *bhāvuka* devotee. He narrated *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* to Mahārāja Parīkṣit, who had been cursed to die after seven days. Although Śukadeva Gosvāmī was a *nirguṇa-brahma-jñānī*, by the mercy of Śrīla Vyāsadeva he realized the superiority of the sweet pastimes of Śrī Bhagavān, who is extolled in choice poetry, and he became attracted to following the path of pure *bhakti*. He imparted the teachings of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* to the faithful King Parīkṣit, because he understood that the ultimate benefit of the *jīvas* lies only in hearing and chanting the topics of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, which are saturated with the sweet and *rasika* pastimes of Svayam Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa. He did not instruct *brahma-jñāna* to Mahārāja Parīkṣit, because it is impossible for the *jīvas* to achieve complete auspiciousness through *brahma-jñāna*. Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī himself states this in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.1.9:

pariniṣṭhito 'pi nairguṇye
uttamaḥ-śloka-līlayā
gṛhīta-cetā rājarṣe
ākhyānaṁ yad adhītavān

O saintly king, my heart was absorbed in *nirguṇa-brahma*, yet I became attracted by the pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is glorified by transcendental verses, and I studied these narrations.

Kaṁsa

Kaṁsa was born from the womb of Mahārāja Ugrasena's wife Padmā by the semen of the demon King Drumila. Like his father, Kaṁsa had a demonic nature, unlike Mahārāja Ugrasena, who was endowed with godly qualities. Kaṁsa imprisoned Mahārāja Ugrasena and declared himself king. His paternal cousin Devakī married Vasudeva, and at the time of the wedding, a divine voice from the sky declared that the eighth child born from Devakī's womb would kill Kaṁsa. The atheist Kaṁsa wanted to kill Devakī in order to counter the prophecy and prove it false. However, after deliberating carefully, he imprisoned Devakī and Vasudeva, thinking, "As soon as Bhagavān accepts a form and takes birth from the eighth pregnancy of Devakī, I will destroy Him."

Māyāvādīs are opposed to the *vigraha* of Bhagavān, for they do not accept that Bhagavān has a form. Their doctrine is that to accept a body is the action of *māyā* and to destroy nescience is *mokṣa*. Kaṁsa was also of this same opinion: "Bhagavān Śrī Viṣṇu (Kṛṣṇacandra) is going to take birth by accepting a material body, so it will be very easy for me to kill Him." He did not know that the transcendental substance is beyond the

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jurisdiction of material substances, such as the material senses. Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa killed him and also his followers such as Pūtanā, Agha, Baka, Tṛnāvarta and Pralamba, and in this way established the special characteristics of His personal, transcendental form.

The fourth chapter of Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda's *Śrī Kṛṣṇa-saṁhitā* (verses 3 and 30) refers to Kaṁsa and Pralambāsura as covered Buddhists and *māyāvādīs*. Kṛṣṇa and Baladeva destroyed them and thus saved the *jīvas* from the devouring mouth of atheistic *māyāvāda*.

devakīm agrahīt kaṁsa-
nāstikya-bhaginīṁ satīm

pralambho jīva-cauras tu
śuddhena śauriṇā hataḥ
kaṁsena prerito duṣṭaḥ
pracchanno bauddha-rūpa-dhṛk

Vasudeva married the sister of the embodiment of atheism, Kaṁsa. Śrī Baladeva killed *jīva-caura*, the vicious Pralambāsura, who was sent by Kaṁsa and who signifies *māyāvāda*, or covered Buddhism.

In this verse, the word *jīva-caura* (those who steal living entities) is especially significant. Buddhists, like the *māyāvādīs*, also believe that *brahma* becomes a *jīva* through the effect of ignorance; in other words, *brahma* is perceived as a *jīva* when covered with ignorance. This attempt to abduct form itself is stealing (*corī*). It is the nature of demons to destroy the individual form and to rob the *jīva* of his very existence. That is why these people are *māyāvādīs*, atheists and *jīva-caura*. Kṛṣṇa and Baladeva re-established *vaiṣṇava-dharma* by destroying *advaita-vāda* in Dvāpara-yuga.

"It is important to know that Viṣṇu Buddha, who was born in the province of Kīkaṭa, or Gayā, as the son of Añjana, or Ajina, and Gautama Buddha, who took birth as the son of Śuddhodhana and Māyā-devī in Kapilavastu, are two different people."

(8) Advaita-vāda or māyāvāda in Kali-yuga

Śākya-siṁha Gautama Buddha was born in approximately 500 BC. Indian philosophers have acknowledged this Buddha as an atheist, because he rejected the Vedas and Īśvara and instead propagated the philosophy of *śūnya-vāda*. His doctrines are known as *bauddha-vāda*, or Buddhism. It is important to know that Viṣṇu Buddha, who was born in the province of Kīkaṭa, or Gayā, as the son of Añjana, or Ajina, and Gautama Buddha, who took birth as the son of Śuddhodhana and Māyā-devī in Kapilavastu, are two different people. Gautama Buddha was enlightened with *tattva-jñāna* in Bodhisattva (Gayā), Viṣṇu Buddha's birthplace. They are both described in famous, authentic Buddhist scriptures such as *Amara-koṣa*, *Prajñā-pāramitā-sūtra* and *Lalitavistāra*. For more detailed information please refer to *Māyāvāda kī Jīvanī* (*The History of Impersonalism*).

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, *Liṅga Purāṇa*, *Bhaviṣya Purāṇa* and *Varāha Purāṇa* describe Buddha as the ninth of the Supreme Lord's ten incarnations (*daśāvatāra*). It is verified there

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that this Buddha (the ninth incarnation) is not Gautama Buddha, the son of Śuddhodhana. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.40.22, obeisances have been offered to Viṣṇu Buddha: *namo buddhāya śuddhāya daitya-dānava-mohine*. This Viṣṇu Buddha was born towards the beginning of Kali-yuga: *kalau prāpte yathā buddhau bhagavān nārāyaṇaḥ prabhuḥ* (*Nṛsiṁha Purāṇa* 36.9). He was born about 3,500 (1,500 BC) years ago in Gayā. But the atheistic Gautama Buddha was born 500 BC. Consequently, they are two different people. Viṣṇu Buddha, who opposed the violence mentioned in the Vedas, was not an atheist, but Gautama Buddha denied both the Vedas and Īśvara and was thus a complete atheist. As we have already seen, Buddhists say that this world is *śūnya*, or void. Śaṅkara Ācārya very cleverly used word jugglery to propagate Gautama Buddha's conception under the name of *māyāvāda*.

Ācārya Śaṅkara

Ācārya Śaṅkara's *guru* is Govindapāda, and Govindapāda's *guru* is Gauḍapāda. We do not find any scripture written by Govindapāda, and it may be said that it is Gauḍapāda who is actually Śaṅkara Ācārya's *guru*. Gauḍapāda was a famous *śūnya-vādī* and his name is of great importance in the history of *māyāvāda*. His two texts, *Māṇḍukya-kārikā*, on which Ācārya Śaṅkara has written a commentary, and *Sāṅkhya-kārikā*, are the life and soul of *māyāvāda*. Thus, Śaṅkara Ācārya actually followed Gauḍapāda and propagated his *śūnya-vāda* doctrine. Śaṅkara Ācārya defeated many *smārta*, *śaiva*, *śākta* and *kāpālika* scholars in scriptural debate and made them his disciples. However, he never defeated any Vaiṣṇava *ācārya* or scholar. There is no historical record anywhere of any Vaiṣṇava being defeated by Śaṅkara Ācārya, or giving up Vaiṣṇavism to accept *advaita-vāda*.

Śrī Śivanātha-śiromaṇi's *Śabdārtha-mañjarī* sheds light on Śaṅkara Ācārya's life history. There we read that Śaṅkara Ācārya was eventually defeated in scriptural debate by a Tibetan Buddhist *lāmā*, who was at that time famous as a *jagad-guru* among the Buddhists. Before commencing the debate, they vowed that the loser would give up his life by falling into a vessel filled with boiling oil. Ācārya Śaṅkara finally admitted defeat, and actually gave up his life as they had agreed. In this way, Śrī Śaṅkara Ācārya, an effulgent flame in this world, departed around AD 812.

After Śaṅkara Ācārya's time, many prominent *ācāryas* of *kevalādvaita-vāda*, or *māyāvāda*, were defeated by Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* in scriptural debates. Others were influenced so much that they accepted Viṣṇu as the Supreme Absolute Truth, acknowledged the superiority of *bhakti* over *jñāna*, gave up *kevalādvaita-vāda* and accepted initiation into *bhakti-dharma*. We may cite as examples Yādavaprakāśa, Śrīdhara Svāmī, Śrī Bilvamaṅgala, Trivikrama Ācārya, Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī, Vāsudeva Sārvabhauma and Śrī Madhusūdana Sarasvatī.

(9) Nirvāṇa is a false concept

We have briefly described the history of *māyāvāda* and critically analyzed its doctrines in the light of historical evidence. We have seen that *māyāvāda* philosophy is based on extremely feeble logic. Consequently, from Satya-yuga until the present time, *māyāvādīs* have constantly accepted defeat at the hands of their opponents on the battlefield of debate. People may still aspire to follow the path of *māyāvāda* to attain *nirvāṇa*, just because this doctrine existed in ancient times. To these people we want to say that

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the *nirvāṇa-mukti* of *māyāvāda* is completely and totally false. In reality, the *jīva* can never attain any such state as *nirvāṇa*, because the supposed condition of *nirvāṇa-mukti* is simply imaginary. We can use historical evidence to prove without any doubt that there is not even a single instance of any *advaita-vādī* attaining this condition. When we analyze the life histories of great *māyāvādīs* like Gauḍapāda, Govindapāda, Ācārya Śaṅkara and Mādhava, we see clearly that none of them achieved the *nirvāṇa-mukti* which they themselves propagated.

According to Śaṅkara Ācārya's biography, after his grand-*guru* Gauḍapāda left his material body, he appeared in Śaṅkara Ācārya's trance when Śaṅkara Ācārya was absorbed in meditation one day, and said, "Śaṅkara, I have heard your praises from your *gurudeva*, Ācārya Govindapāda. I have also heard that you have composed a beautiful commentary on my *Māṇḍukya-kārikā*. I want to see it." Ācārya Śaṅkara immediately showed Gauḍapāda the commentary. Gauḍapāda felt very happy to see it and, after giving his approval, he left.

From this incident it is evident that Gauḍapāda and Govindapāda did not become liberated from their subtle material bodies and achieve *nirvāṇa-mukti*. In the first place, how could Gauḍapāda hear about Śaṅkara from the mouth of Govindapāda, if both Gauḍapāda and Govindapāda had achieved *nirvāṇa-mukti*? Secondly, how could Ācārya Śaṅkara show his commentary on *Māṇḍukya-kārikā* to Gauḍapāda, if Gauḍapāda had attained *nirvāṇa*? If they had actually attained *nirvāṇa-mukti*, neither incident could possibly have taken place. If we accept these incidents as real, then the *nirvāṇa-mukti*, or *nirviśeṣa-mukti*, of the *māyāvādīs* must be false. Conversely, if we accept *nirvāṇa-mukti*, or *nirviśeṣa-mukti*, as real, then the aforementioned

"If the chief propagators of *nirvāṇa-mukti* – those whom we can regard as the founders of the doctrine – could not attain such *mukti* themselves, then how can anyone else expect to?"

incidents are either false or imaginary. Even if we accept that the incident is partly true, still, the liberation of both the *māyāvādī ācāryas* is false, according to the *māyāvādīs'* description of the symptoms of *nirvāṇa-mukti*.

Putting this incident aside, the biography of Śaṅkara states that he personally reincarnated as Mādhava Ācārya; that is, he appeared in the form of Vidyāraṇya. Now, how is this consistent with the conception of *nirvāṇa-mukti*? *Māyāvāda* doctrine says that after *nirvāṇa-mukti*, the *jīvas* have no existence separate from *brahma*, which is formless, changeless, inactive and without any attributes. However, we see that Gauḍapāda, Govindapāda and Śaṅkara Ācārya all had their respective separate existence. How can we logically accept, then, that they had actually attained *nirvāṇa-mukti*? The *nirvāṇa-mukti* which the *māyāvāda ācāryas* propagate has no aspect or principle which allows any reciprocal dialogue, and what to speak of reincarnation, after the attainment of *nirvāṇa*. This consideration very clearly shows that *nirvāṇa-mukti* is simply a false and deceptive expression, or a trap to collect followers. If the chief propagators of *nirvāṇa-mukti* – those whom we can regard as the founders of the doctrine – could not attain such *mukti* themselves, then how can anyone else expect to?

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Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Vinoda-bihārī tattvāṣṭakam

Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Vinoda-bihārījī are the presiding deities in Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha. When They were installed, some Vaiṣṇavas were curious to know why both the deities have the same colour, and they respectfully asked Śrīla Ācārya Kesarī, "In our Gauḍīya *sampradāya* and elsewhere, Śrīmatī Rādhikā's deity is made of white marble and Śrī Kṛṣṇa's is made of black marble. How is it that both the deities you have manifested are white?" Śrīla Ācāryadeva answered this question in a beautiful and unprecedented way by composing *Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Vinoda-bihārī-tattvāṣṭakam*. *Paramārādhya* Śrīla Gurudeva has wonderfully manifested the fathomless ocean of *śrī rādhā-tattva*, *śrī kṛṣṇa-tattva*, *prema-tattva*, *rasa-tattva* and the topmost *rūpānuga* current of thought within the small pot of this *tattvāṣṭakam*. We will try to reveal something of his sentiments in the following explanation, using *śākhā-candra-nyāya*, the logic of the branch and the moon.[1]

Verse 1

rādhā-cintā-niveśena
yasya kāntir vilopitā
śrī-kṛṣṇa-caraṇaṁ vande
rādhāliṅgita-vigraham

We pray at the lotus feet of that form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is embraced and marked by Śrī Rādhikā (*rādhāliṅgita* and *rādhācihnita*). When Śrīmatī Rādhikā, the personification of *mahābhāva*, displayed *māna*, Her jealous anger, Śrī Kṛṣṇa became thoroughly immersed in separation from Her. His own dark complexion vanished and He assumed Her bright, golden lustre. Or, we pray at the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa who is beautified by Śrīmatī Rādhikā's golden lustre when She embraces Him after Her *māna* has broken.

Tattva-prakāśikā-vṛtti – the commentary which illuminates the philosophical principles

In this verse the word *rādhāliṅgita* has two meanings. The first is *rādhayā liṅgita* – marked by Śrī Rādhā. The second meaning is *rādhayā āliṅgita* – embraced by Śrīmatī Rādhikā. When Śrīmatī Rādhikā exhibits *māna*, and *dhīra-lalita nāyaka* Śrī Kṛṣṇa becomes completely absorbed in feelings of separation from Her, His natural, bluish radiant lustre disappears and He helplessly accepts Śrīmatī Rādhikā's golden complexion. In other words, His own lustre becomes golden. He does not have to perform even the slightest endeavour for this; it happens automatically. It is like the strong *bhṛṅgī* wasp forcefully arresting the weak *telacaṭṭā* insect and confining it in its cave. When the weak insect hears the strange sound made by the *bhṛṅgī*, it becomes afraid, and constantly contemplating the form of the *bhṛṅgī*, it assumes a bodily form exactly like that of the *bhṛṅgī*.

We can also give the example of Mahārāja Bharata, who was thinking of a fawn at the time of his death and so acquired the body of a deer in his next life. In the same way, Śrī Kṛṣṇa takes on Śrīmatī Rādhikā's golden lustre as He becomes more and more absorbed in thoughts of Her.

One such incident is described in a conversation between Varāhadeva and Dharaṇī

1 Editor: 'The logic of the branch and the moon': even though the moon is far away in the heavens, one may indicate its whereabouts with reference to something close at hand, for example, the branch of a tree.

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Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Vinoda-bihārī at Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha, Mathurā

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in the *Varāha-saṁhitā*. Śrī Varāhadeva told Dharaṇī, "In Vṛndāvana there is a large banyan tree on the bank of Yamunā, and its branches spread far and wide in all directions. Many different types of birds are always chirping on its branches. Surrounding the base of this tree is a beautiful raised platform on which Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa enjoy delightful pastimes. Once, Śrī Kṛṣṇa was relishing *rāsa-līlā* with His *sakhīs* on the bank of the Yamunā. Crores of *gopīs* were revelling in pastimes with Him and He began to dance with the *gopīs* one after another, absorbed in ecstatic love, sometimes embracing one and sometimes another. Kṛṣṇa enjoyed a variety of loving exchanges, sometimes with Śrīmatī Rādhikā and sometimes with others.

"Śrīmatī Rādhikā observed that Kṛṣṇa was embracing and dancing with other *gopīs* as He was with Her. Seeing that He was not honouring Her superiority over the other *gopīs*, She became angry with Him. She immediately left the *rāsa-sthalī* and hid in a nearby *kuñja*. After a short time, Kṛṣṇa noticed Śrīmatī Rādhikā's absence and became restless. 'She for whom I perform this *rāsa-vilāsa*, who is dearer to Me than My very life, has left Me,' He thought. 'Where did She go?'

"Dancing and dallying with millions and millions of *gopīs* could not capture Kṛṣṇa's heart even for a moment. Afflicted with separation from Śrīmatī Rādhikā, He left the *rāsa-maṇḍalī* at once and began to search in one *kuñja* after another, calling out, 'O Rādhā, where are You?' As He searched widely for Śrīmatī Rādhikā, the crown jewel of all His beloved *sakhīs*, He arrived at the bank of the Kālindī. By now He was tired and hopeless from His long search, so under the shade of a tamarind tree in a charming *kuñja*, He began chanting the name of Rādhā in deep anxiety. Sometimes He would call out in a melancholy way, 'Praneśvarī! Alas! O Queen of My heart! You have deserted Me. Where have You gone?'

rādhā viśleṣataḥ kṛṣṇaḥ
hy ekadā premā-vihvalaḥ
rādhā-mantraṁ japan dhyāyan
rādhā sarvatra paśyati

Varāha-saṁhitā

"Overwhelmed by deep separation from Śrīmatī Rādhikā, Śrī Kṛṣṇa madly chanted the *rādhā-mantra*. As He meditated on Her, She gradually began to manifest Herself to Him everywhere. Feeling Her presence inwardly and outwardly, He became like Śrīmatī Rādhikā, and His bodily lustre also became like Hers." This is the first meaning of the word *rādhāliṅgita*.

Śrī Gaurasundara used to go to Imlitālā, because that is where this pastime took place and it is the location of that particular tamarind tree. Overwhelmed with emotion, He used to chant the holy name, weeping bitterly. In the afternoon, He would go to beg alms in a village near Akrūra-ghāṭa. It seems that Śrī Gaurasundara came to Vraja-dhāma from Nīlācala only to attain and strengthen His *rādhā-bhāva*, because without *rādhā-bhāva* He would never fulfil His three desires.

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, the crest jewel of the dynasty of *rasika* Vaiṣṇavas, wrote the verse *hariḥ puraṭa-sundara-dyuti-kadamba-sandīpitaḥ*. Here he indicates the form of Hari which is effulgent with the radiance of gold, meaning the form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa which is radiant with Rādhā's golden splendour when He is deeply absorbed in thoughts of Her. Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara, who is an intimate associate of Śrī Gaurasundara and also the *rasa-śāstra guru*, has indicated the same mood in his *kaḍacā* (notebook), "*rādhā-bhāva-dyuti-suvalitaṁ naumi kṛṣṇa-svarūpam* –

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I repeatedly bow down to that Kṛṣṇa who is resplendent with the lustre and intrinsic mood of Śrīmatī Rādhikā."

Now we will discuss the second meaning of *rādhālińgita*. Here the poet offers prayers to Śrī Kṛṣṇa when He is embraced by His beloved Śrī Rādhikā, who has assumed the mood of a *svādhīna-bhartṛkā-nāyikā*, the heroine who happily controls her lover after her *māna* (jealous anger) has broken. Seeing Kṛṣṇa bewildered in separation from Her, Śrīmatī Rādhikā's heart also became aggrieved. Her self-control and sulkiness immediately disappeared and She bound Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the ropes of Her embrace. Kṛṣṇa then became content and all His grief and sorrows dissolved. Śrī Rāya Rāmānanda refers to this in his dialogue with Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Madhya-līlā* 8.194):

nā so ramaṇa, nā hāma ramaṇī
duṅhū-mana manobhava peṣala jāni'
e sakhī, se-saba prema-kāhinī
kānu-ṭhāme kahabi vichurala jāni

In the madness of love in separation, Śrīmatī Rādhikā says: Our *prema* reached its ultimate limit in the mere blink of an eye. We have met each other in such a way that We have become one; I have even forgotten that I am the beloved and You are My lover. Now I am separated from You, and this loving exchange has become like a mere fairy tale. Is this how virtuous men act in their pursuit of love?

This poem discloses the ultimate stage of *milana*, or meeting, in which Śrī Kṛṣṇa is completely embraced by Rādhikā. Soon after this, Rāya Rāmānanda said to Śrī Gaurasundara (*Madhya-līlā* 8.268–271):

pahile dekhiluṅ tomāra sannyāsi-svarūpa
ebe tomā dekhi muñi śyāma-gopa-rūpa

tomāra sammukhe dekhi kāńcana-pańcālikā
tāṅra gaura-kāntye tomāra sarva aṅga ḍhākā

tāhāte prakaṭa dekhi sa-vaṁśī vadana
nānā-bhāve cańcala tāhe kamala-nayana

ei-mata tomā dekhi' haya camatkāra
akapaṭe kaha, prabhu, kāraṇa ihāra

A doubt arose in Rāya Rāmānanda Prabhu's heart and he enquired from Śrīman Mahāprabhu: Earlier I saw You in the dress of a *sannyāsī*, but now I see You as a bluish cowherd boy. At the same time I am witnessing another most uncommon phenomenon. It is as if a wonderful and beautiful doll (the form of a *gopī*) is standing in front of You, covering Your entire body with Her golden lustre. I am directly perceiving that in that form You are holding a flute to Your lips, and Your lotus eyes are dancing about, displaying a mood of deep hankering. Please be merciful to me and tell me truthfully what is the reason for Your manifesting such a form.

The deep and confidential purport of these four verses is that Kṛṣṇa's radiant bluish lustre is covered by Śrīmatī Rādhikā's golden radiance, because each limb of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's body is embraced by each limb of Śrīmatī Rādhikā's body. The body of Muralīdhārī Śrī Kṛṣṇa remains unchanged; only His lustre becomes golden. It is this very form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa who is embraced by Śrīmatī Rādhikā, which is worshipped in all the temples of our Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti.

This profoundly philosophical prayer, which is replete with the most exalted sentiments, clearly indicates its author's exclusive allegiance

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to Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī's conception. To imbibe this elusive mood of the damsels of Vraja in our hearts, we must first understand the principles of *bhakti*. There are three stages in the progression of *bhakti*: *sādhana-bhakti*, *bhāva-bhakti* and in perfection, *prema-bhakti*. *Sādhana-bhakti* matures into *bhāva-bhakti*, and finally it matures into *prema*.

Sādhana-bhakti, which is performed during the stage of practice, has two divisions: *vaidhī* and *rāgānuga*. When the practice of *bhakti* bears the fruit of *prema*, there is still a corresponding subtle difference between *prema* arising from *vaidhī-sādhana-bhakti* and *prema* arising from *rāgānuga-sādhana-bhakti*. *Prema* which has developed from the performance of *vaidhī-bhakti* is imbued with reverence for Śrī Bhagavān's majesty and is known as *vaikuṇṭhīya-prema*. *Prema* which is obtained through the cultivation of *rāgānuga-bhakti* is completely free from even a scent of reverence and is known as immaculate, sweet *vraja-prema*, the most elevated stage, which is exhibited in the mood of the *gopīs*.

In order to comprehend *rāgānuga-bhakti* properly, it is essential that one first understands *rāgātmika-bhāva*. *Rāga* is the unquenchable loving thirst arising from intense absorption in the object of one's affection, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The deep and intense loving attachment which this *rāga* produces is called *rāgātmika-prema*.

The distinctive and unique *prīti*, or love, of the eternal inhabitants of Vraja – including the cows, deer, parrots and other animals and birds – is called *rāgātmika-prīti*. It is of two types: *sambandha-rūpā* and *kāma-rūpā*. The term *kāma-rūpā* refers only to the affection of Kṛṣṇa's beloved sweethearts, and the longing which follows in the wake of this *kāma-rūpā rati* is called *kāmānuga-bhakti*. *Kāma-rūpā rāgātmika-prema* is also of two kinds: *sambhoga-icchāmayī* and *tat-tad-bhāva-icchāmayī*. The *rati* of *nāyikās* such as Śrīmatī Rādhikā, Candrāvalī and Śyāmalā, who desire to meet Kṛṣṇa for His pleasure is called *sambhoga-icchāmayī*. *Tāsāṁ bhāva-mādhurya-kāmitā* (*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.2.298). In other words, *sakhīs* who have *tat-tad-bhāva-icchātmikā rati* do not desire to meet Kṛṣṇa independently, but are intent on relishing Śrīmatī Rādhikā's sweet mood when She meets with Him.

In the same way, there are five types of *sakhīs*: *sakhī*, *nitya-sakhī*, *prāṇa-sakhī*, *priya-sakhī* and *priya-narma-sakhī*. Those who have equal *sneha*, or affection, for Śrī Rādhā and Śrī Kṛṣṇa are known as *sama-snehā*, whereas those who display more *sneha* towards one or the other of Them are called *viṣama-snehā*. Vṛndā and Dhaniṣṭhā are examples of *sakhīs* with *viṣama-snehā*, having more affection for Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The *nitya-sakhīs*, for example, Kastūrī Mañjarī and Maṇi Mañjarī, are also *viṣama-sneha*, but they have more affection for Śrīmatī Rādhikā. The chief *sakhīs* in this group are called *prāṇa-sakhīs*, of whom Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī is the foremost. *Gopīs* such as Mālatī are *priya-sakhīs*. They have *sama-sneha* for Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, but still show somewhat more favour towards Śrīmatī Rādhikā. Among these *priya-sakhīs*, the most dear and prominent such as Lalitā and Viśākhā are called *priya-narma-* or *parama-preṣṭha-sakhīs*. These *nāyikās*, or heroines, are adorned with all good qualities, yet they feel more satisfied in arranging the meeting of the Divine Couple, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. *Sakhīs* such as Rūpa, Rati and Lavaṅga, who are the chief among the *nitya-sakhīs* and *prāṇa-sakhīs*, are devoted to the uninterrupted and unhesitating service of Śrīmatī Rādhikā in the secluded *nikuñjas*. These *sakhīs* do not have

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any desire to meet with Kṛṣṇa separately, and feel completely satisfied when they relish the moods of Śrīmatī Rādhikā in Her meeting with Him.

All the inhabitants of Goloka Vraja – including the *gopas*, *gopīs*, cows, calves, other animals and birds – are *rāgātmika*. *Sādhakas* who follow the moods of these inhabitants of Vraja in order to attain their *bhāva* are called *rāgānuga*. Amongst these *rāgānuga-sādhakas*, only those who specifically follow the internal mood of Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī are *rūpānuga*. Thus, every *rūpānuga-sādhaka* is also a *rāgānuga-sādhaka*, but *rāgānuga-sādhakas* are not necessarily *rūpānuga*. *Rūpānuga-sādhakas* are those who with the external body follow the process of *bhajana* as given by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, and simultaneously with their internally conceived spiritual body (*siddha-deha*) follow the moods of Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī as she eternally serves Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa in Vraja. Only that sort of *rāgānuga-sādhaka* is a *rūpānuga* Vaiṣṇava. The topmost follower of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī (*rūpānuga-vara*), Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, prays in his *Śrī Vilāpa-kusumāñjali* (96, 16):

tavaivāsmi tavaivāsmi
na jīvāmi tvayā vinā
iti vijñāya devī tvaṁ
naya māṁ caraṇāntike

He Devī Śrī Rādhike! I am Yours! I am Yours! I cannot live without You. Knowing this, please give me a place at Your lotus feet.

pādābjayos tava vinā vara-dāsyam eva
nānyat kadāpi samaye kila devī yāce
sākhyāya te mama namo 'stu namo 'stu nityaṁ
dāsyāya te mama raso 'stu raso 'stu satyam

O Devī Rādhike, I never beg for anything but that most exalted direct service unto Your lotus feet. Time and again I offer *praṇāma* from afar to the position as Your *sakhī*, but I vow that my unwavering devotion should always be only to be Your maidservant.

"Amongst these *rāgānuga-sādhakas*, only those who specifically follow the internal mood of Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī are *rūpānuga*. Thus, every *rūpānuga-sādhaka* is also a *rāgānuga-sādhaka*, but *rāgānuga-sādhakas* are not necessarily *rūpānuga*."

We also see Śrīla Narottama Ṭhākura's desire to be a *rūpānuga* in his prayer:

śrī-rūpa-mañjarī-pāda, sei mora sampada,
sei mora bhajana-pūjana
sei mora prāṇa-dhana, sei mora ābharaṇa,
sei mora jīvanera jīvana
sei mora rasa-nidhi, sei mora vāñchā-siddhi,
sei mora vedera dharama

The lotus feet of Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī are my dear-most treasure. They are the topmost object of my worship and inner devotional practices. Her lotus feet are my most cherished wealth, more dear than my own life. They are the exquisite ornament of my life, and indeed they are the very essence of my existence. Her lotus feet are the treasure house of *rasa*. They bestow the perfection of my desires and they are the conclusion of all the Vedas.

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Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, an *ācārya* for the followers of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, submits the following plea in his *Gīta-mālā* (Part Five – *Siddhi-lālasā*):

śrī-rūpa-mañjarī, saṅge yābo kabe,
rasa-sevā-śikṣā-tare
tad-anugā ha'ye, rādhā-kuṇḍa-taṭe,
rahiba harṣitāntare

When will Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī take me with her to the banks of Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa to teach me *rasa-sevā*? I will live there under her guidance and pass my time feeling great delight within my heart.

śrī-rādhāra sukhe, kṛṣṇera ye sukha,
jāniba manete āmi
rādhā-pāda chāḍi, śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅgame,
kabhu nā haiba kāmī

rādhā-pakṣa chāḍi, je jana se jana,
je bhāve se bhāve thāke
āmi ta rādhikā, pakṣa-pātī sadā,
kabhu nāhi heri tāke

I know that Rādhikā's pleasure is Kṛṣṇa's only source of joy. Therefore, I will never desire to abandon Her lotus feet to enjoy separately with Him. I am always in Rādhikā's entourage and I never even glance upon the faces of those who leave Her, no matter who they are or what their mood is.

These moods are the life and soul of the *rūpānuga* Vaiṣṇavas. My most revered *śrīla gurupāda-padma* is a prominent *rūpānuga-ācārya*, and his heartfelt sentiments are quite clearly manifest in this first verse of *Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Vinoda-bihārī-tattvāṣṭakam*. His *bhāva* is that Śrī Kṛṣṇa should be immersed in the remembrance of Śrī Rādhā, that He should search for Śrīmatījī, and that He should feel distressed in separation from Her. This verse expresses partiality towards Śrīmatī Rādhikā and the *rūpānuga* conception in both separation and union.

Verse 2

sevya-sevaka-sambhoge
dvayor-bedaḥ kuto bhavet
vipralambhe tu sarvasya
bhedaḥ sadā vivarddhate

Śrī Kṛṣṇa is *sevya* (He who always takes service from the *sevaka*) and *bhoktā* (He who is always enjoying). Śrīmatī Rādhikā is *sevaka* (She who always serves the *sevya*) and *bhogya* (She who is enjoyed). When They meet together and enjoy each other, how can there be any distinction between Them? (At that time *bheda*, or distinction, vanishes and *abheda*, or non-difference, is apparent.) However, in the stage of *vipralambha*, or separation, *bheda* perpetually becomes more intense.

Tattva-prakāśikā-vṛtti

At the time of union (*sambhoga*), no difference exists between *sevya*, the one who is served, and *sevaka*, the one who serves. Śrī Nanda-nandana, who is the embodiment of *śṛṅgāra-rasa*, the mellow of amorous love, is the ultimate limit of *sevya-* or *bhoktā-tattva*, and Śrīmatī Rādhikā is the ultimate limit of *sevaka-tattva*, or *āśraya-tattva*. Their *anurāga* is known as *sthāyībhāva*, permanent emotion. When this *anurāga* reaches its ultimate limit it is known as *yāvadāśraya-vṛtti*. In that stage, Śrīmatī Rādhikā's unprecedented *anurāga* for Kṛṣṇa attains the level of *sva-samvedya-daśā*, when the *aṣṭa-sāttvika-bhāvas*, the eight types of bodily transformations arising

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from *śuddha-sattva*, manifest in the *sudīpta*, or blazing, condition. [Only Śrī Rādhā, who is Śrī Kṛṣṇa's special beloved, attains this stage.]

In this special condition, the *sevya* and *sevaka* both completely forget Their own identities. They also forget the distinctions, 'He is the lover' and 'I am the beloved'. Their hearts melt and become one. In this stage it is not possible to conceive of or imagine any distinction between Them. However, in the stage of separation, They are both seen searching for each other in great distress. The dialogue between Rāya Rāmānanda and Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu on the banks of the sacred river Godāvarī gives us insight into this glorious and unprecedented *rasarāja-mahābhāva*, Śrīmatī Rādhikā and Śrī Kṛṣṇa's combined form, which manifests as Śrīman Mahāprabhu.

nā so ramaṇa, nā hāma ramaṇī
duṅhū-mana manobhava peṣala jāni'
e sakhī, se-saba prema-kāhinī
kānu-ṭhāme kahabi vichurala jāni'

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta
(*Madhya-līlā* 8.194)

Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara has also envisioned this profound and confidential *bhāva* in his diary:

rādhā kṛṣṇa-praṇaya-vikṛtir
hlādinī śaktir asmād
ekātmānāv api bhuvi purā
deha-bhedaṁ gatau tau
caitanyākhyaṁ prakaṭam adhunā
tad-dvayaṁ caikyam āptaṁ
rādhā-bhāva-dyuti-suvalitaṁ
naumi kṛṣṇa-svarūpam

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta
(*Ādi-līlā* 1.5)

Śrīmatī Rādhikā is Kṛṣṇa's *hlādinī-śaktī*, His pleasure-giving potency, and the embodiment of the transformation of His *praṇaya*, intimate love. Since They are one soul (*ekātmā-svarūpa*), She is intrinsically non-different from Kṛṣṇa and is one in identity with Him. However, to enjoy the transcendental pleasure of Their loving pastimes, Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa have eternally manifested Themselves in these two apparently separate forms. Now these two transcendental identities, *sevya* and *sevaka*, *viṣaya-tattva* and *āśraya-tattva*, have manifested in one form as *śrī caitanya-tattva*. I repeatedly bow down to Śacīnandana, who is the *svarūpa* of Kṛṣṇa and who is adorned with the moods and complexion of Śrīmatī Rādhikā.

In this verse, Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara has used the word *ekātmā* to establish that Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, *sevaka-tattva* and *sevya-tattva*, are non-different from each other. Then he says, *'deha bhedaṁ gatau tau'* to indicate the difference between the two *tattvas*. *Param-rasika tattva-ācārya* Śrīla Gurupāda-padma has indicated these same profound and confidential sentiments in the second verse of his composition.

Verse 3

cil-līlā-mithunaṁ tattvaṁ
bhedābhedam acintyakam
śakti-śaktimator aikyaṁ
yugapadvarttate sadā

The eternal Divine Couple are the embodiments of the combined form of *śakti* and *śaktimān*. To fulfil Their transcendental, pleasure-giving pastimes, They join and become one in the stage of union (*sambhoga*) and yet simultaneously and inconceivably exist as different and non-different from each other. This means that *para-tattva* is

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never without potency (*niḥśaktik*). *Śakti* and *śaktimān* are eternally united together in that *para-tattva*. He is *puruṣottama*, the Supreme Male, endowed with completely transcendental pastimes, the original Self in the amorous form, the combined form of *śakti* and *śaktimān*. That amorous form is Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa as *gaura-tattva*. By the influence of *acintya-śakti*, the contrary principles of difference and non-difference simultaneously reside in Him eternally.

Tattva-prakāśikā-vṛtti

Śrī Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the non-dual Absolute Truth (*advaya-jñāna para-tattva*). He is the embodiment of the nectar of all mellows (*akhila-rasāmṛta-mūrti*), and He possesses all potencies (*sarva-śaktimān*). His natural internal potency is also one and is known as *svarūpa-śakti*. By the desire of *śaktimān* Śrī Kṛṣṇa, this singular potency manifests in various forms to accomplish different tasks. It expands itself in the form of *cit-śakti* to manifest the spiritual world (*cit-jagat*), as *jīva-śakti* to manifest all the living entities, and as *māyā-śakti* to manifest the entire material creation. This potency also fulfils Śrī Kṛṣṇa's various desires in the form of *saṁvit*, *sandhinī* and *hlādinī*. *Prema* is the essence of *hlādinī*, *mahābhāva* is the essence of *prema*, and Śrīmatī Rādhikā is the embodiment of this *mahābhāva*. That *parā-śakti*, which is the essence of the essence of *prema* in the form of Śrīmatī Rādhikā, eternally fulfils all the desires of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is the personification of *śṛṅgāra-rasa*. At the time of union, Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa are *mithuna-tattva*, or *yugala-tattva*, the amorous Couple. That is to say, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, desiring to relish a particular type of *rasa*, has accepted the external bodily lustre and the internal *mahābhāva* of Śrīmatī Rādhikā, and is eternally present in the form of Śrī Gaurasundara, who is Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa combined. Thus Śrī Gaurasundara is also *mithuna-tattva*. Svayam Bhagavān Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* have accepted Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's simultaneous and inconceivable difference and non-difference. This truth has been established in the first verse.

Śrī Śaṅkara Ācārya accepted the unqualified, formless and powerless *brahma* as *para-tattva*. This *brahma* is without differences within itself (*svagata-bheda*), differences from others of the same kind or category (*sajātīya-bheda*) and differences from others of different kinds or categories (*vijātīya-bheda*). He called this doctrine *kevalādvaita-vāda*. Many *ācāryas* have used irrefutable logic and strong śāstric evidence to cut Śrī Śaṅkara's doctrine of *nirviśeṣa kevalādvaita*. These *ācāryas* include Śrī Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vedavyāsa, the author of *Vedānta-sūtra*; Parāśara; Auḍulaumi and other *ācāryas* of ancient times who had realized knowledge of the Absolute Truth; Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* such as Śrī Rāmānuja, Śrī Madhva, Śrī Viṣṇu Svāmī and Śrī Nimbāditya; Śaivite *ācāryas* such as Śrī Nīlakaṇṭha; as well as *ācāryas* such as Śrī Bhāskara Ācārya who came in a later period.

Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* have accepted *para-brahma* and His *śakti*, as well as the extremely beautiful *sac-cid-ānanda śrī vigraha* of *para-brahma* who possesses all attributes (*saviśeṣa*). *Ācāryas* from the different Vaiṣṇava *sampradāyas* have propagated pure *bhakti* in the world: Śrī Rāmānuja preached *viśiṣṭādvaita-vāda*, Śrī Madhvācārya presented *dvaita-vāda*, Śrī Viṣṇu Svāmī *śuddhādvaita-vāda* and Śrī Nimbāditya *svābhāvika dvaitādvaita-* (*bhedābheda-*) *vāda*. According to Śrī Rāmānuja, *para-tattva* is the *saviśeṣa-brahma* who possesses both *cit* and *acit śaktis*. According to Śrī Madhvācārya, there

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are five types of eternal differences: between (1) *brahma* and *jīva*, (2) *jīva* and *jīva*, (3) *jīva* and *jaḍa* (inert matter), (4) *jaḍa* and *jaḍa* and (5) *jaḍa* and *brahma*. Śrī Viṣṇu Svāmī has accepted that the eternal *vigraha* of *para-brahma*, His associates, His pastimes, His abode and so on all exist in the plane of pure existence beyond the jurisdiction of *māyā*. Similarly, Śrī Nimbāditya has accepted the natural difference and non-difference between *saviśeṣa-brahma*, *jīva* and *jagat*.

Svayam Bhagavān Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has completed the opinions of the Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* wherever they were lacking. He has embraced the universal doctrines of the Vedas and the Upaniṣads, and has established the relationship of eternal oneness and difference between *para-brahma*, *śakti*, and also *jīva* and *jagat*, which are transformations of *śakti*. This difference (*bheda*) and oneness (*abheda*) is *acintya*, inconceivable, because it is beyond the conception of human intelligence and can be understood only by following scriptural wisdom. The Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* following in the footsteps of Śrīman Mahāprabhu have accepted this *acintya-bhedābheda-tattva*.

No scriptures have ever referred to *para-tattva* as being without distinctions, without potency, formless or devoid of transcendental qualities. In Śrīla Vedavyāsa's *Brahma-sūtra* we find *sūtras* such as *janmādy asya yataḥ*, *arūpavadeva tat-pradhānatvāt*, *api saṁrādhane pratyakṣānumānābhyām* and *ānandamayo 'bhyāsāt*, and in Vedānta also *śakti-śaktimator abhedaḥ*. Thus, Śrīla Vyāsadeva has openly accepted the *sac-cid-ānanda vigraha*, *śakti*, name, form, qualities, pastimes and abode of *para-brahma*, the Supreme Entity. Various *mantras* in the Upaniṣads also firmly establish the *śakti* of *para-brahma*, His *sac-cid-ānanda vigraha* and the doctrine of *bheda* and *abheda*, and other transcendental conclusions. For example, we read: *yato vā imāni bhutāni jāyante, yena jātāni jīvanti, yat prayanty abhisaṁviśanti tad vijijñāsasva tad brahma; nityo nityānāṁ cetanaś cetanānām* and *parāsya śaktir vividhaiva śrūyate*.

We find descriptions of the transcendental nature, name, form, qualities, pastimes and associates of *para-brahma*, as well as *acintya-bhedābheda-tattva*, throughout *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the crown jewel of all authentic evidence. All these conclusions have been specifically supported by verses such as *aho bhāgyam aho bhāgyaṁ nanda-gopa-vrajaukasām / yan-mitraṁ paramānandaṁ pūrṇaṁ brahma sanātanam*; *gūḍhaṁ paraṁ brahma manuṣya-liṅgam* and *kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam*. All these doctrines are specifically and distinctly described in the *catuḥ-ślokī* of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (2.9.33–36). We will not give an elaborate description here for want of sufficient space.

Verse 4

tattvam ekaṁ paraṁ vidyāl-
līlayā tad dvidhā-sthitam
gauraḥ kṛṣṇaḥ svayaṁ hy etad
ubhāvubhayam āpnutaḥ

The non-dual Absolute Truth, *advaya-jñāna para-tattva*, is one. But, that Absolute Truth is eternally manifested in two forms for the sake of conducting pastimes. One form is that of Śrī Gaurasundara and the other is that of Śrī Kṛṣṇasundara. Both are *para-tattva* and are non-different from each other. Truly, Śrī Gaurasundara is Kṛṣṇa Himself and Śrī Kṛṣṇasundara is Śrī Gaurasundara. Both manifest both forms; that is to say, Śrī Kṛṣṇasundara has become

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Śrī Gaurasundara and Śrī Gaurasundara has become Śrī Kṛṣṇasundara.

Tattva-prakāśikā-vṛtti

Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara, who is the main internal associate of Śrī Gaurasundara, has elaborately explained the confidential *siddhānta* of *śrī gaura-kṛṣṇa-tattva* in his diary:

rādhā kṛṣṇa-praṇaya-vikṛtir
hlādinī śaktir asmād
ekātmānāv api bhuvi purā
deha-bhedaṁ gatau tau
caitanyākhyaṁ prakaṭam adhunā
tad-dvayaṁ caikyam āptaṁ
rādhā-bhāva-dyuti-suvalitaṁ
naumi kṛṣṇa-svarūpam

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta
(*Ādi-līlā* 1.5)

The purport is that Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa are one identity. Śrīmatī Rādhikā, who is the embodiment of *mahābhāva*, and Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is the embodiment of all *rasa*, assume one form to enjoy pleasurable pastimes when they meet (*sambhoga*). At that time They forget even the mood of being lover and beloved, and thus it is impossible even to imagine any difference between the two. But in separation, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa manifest two separate forms and relish *vipralambhā-bhāva* through various loving pastimes. Again, in order to enjoy some special *bhāvas*, these two *tattvas* unite and manifest Themselves in the form of Śrī Śacīnandana Gaurahari. Actually, Śrīmatī Rādhikā is the transformation of Kṛṣṇa's *praṇaya* (intimate love), and She is also His *svarūpa-śakti*. She gives pleasure to Him by fulfilling all His desires, and that is why She is also called *hlādinī-śakti*.

In *Tattva-sandarbha*, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī has quoted verses from the Saṁhitās which reveal that Śrī Gaurasundara is the combined form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Śrī Rādhā:

antaḥ kṛṣṇaṁ bahir gauraṁ
darśitāṅgādi-vaibhavam
kalau saṅkīrtanādyaiḥ smaḥ
kṛṣṇa-caitanyam āśritāḥ

Tattva-sandarbha (2)

I take shelter of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu in Kali-yuga through the process of *saṅkīrtana*. Internally He is Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself, and externally He appears in His *gaura-svarūpa*. He has manifested Himself along with His majestic influence beginning with His *aṅga*, or limbs, and *upāṅga*, or subsidiary limbs. (Namely, Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu, Śrī Advaita Ācārya, Śrī Gadādhara and His devotees headed by Śrīvāsa).

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has also offered obeisances to the most munificent Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who distributes *kṛṣṇa-prema* and who is non-different from Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself: *namo mahā-vadānyāya kṛṣṇa-prema-pradāya te / kṛṣṇāya kṛṣṇa-caitanya-nāmne gaura-tviṣe namaḥ*. This *siddhānta* has been supported in the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*: *golokaṁ ca parityajya lokānāṁ trāṇa-kāraṇāt / kalau gaurāṅga-rūpeṇa līlā-lāvaṇya-vigrahaḥ*.

In many other scriptures, and especially in the books of the Gosvāmīs, there is plenty of evidence proving that Śrī Gaurasundara is Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and vice versa. In *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Ādi-līlā* 2.109) it is stated: *sei kṛṣṇa avatārī vrajendra-kumāra / āpane caitanya-rūpe kaila avatāra*. Śrīla Narottama Ṭhākura has also written: *vrajendra-nandana jei śacī-sūta haila sei / balarāma haila nitāi*.

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Verse 5

sarve varṇāḥ yatrāviṣṭāḥ
gaura-kāntir vikāśate
sarve varṇena hīnastu
kṛṣṇa-varṇaḥ prakāśate

When all colours are mixed together, a golden hue manifests. For instance, the sun is golden because all the colours are present in it. On the other hand, the absence of all colour yields a blackness that is beyond mundane colour.

Tattva-prakāśikā-vṛtti

Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Śrī Gaura are both the ultimate limit of *para-tattva* and are non-different from each other. The bodily lustre of Svayam Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa has the distinctive hue of fresh, dark-bluish rain clouds or the effulgence of a sapphire. The bodily lustre of Śrī Gaurasundara defeats the splendour of lightning and molten gold. Svayam Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Svayam Bhagavān Śrī Gaurasundara are both the transcendental Absolute Truth. They are completely beyond the qualities and actions of material nature, and thus They cannot be compared to anything in this mundane world. Still, some comparisons have been given, following the logic of the moon and a branch, so that conditioned souls may easily come to some understanding. However, these examples only refer to the particular aspect of the transcendental form of Bhagavān that they illustrate. They cannot be used to explain the complete form of the Absolute Truth.

At night a small child may want to see the moon, and the parent may show it to him by indicating its position above the branch of a nearby tree. The moon appears to be just above the branch of the tree, but it is really thousands and thousands of miles away. In the same way, *bhagavat-tattva* is in reality completely beyond all the mundane qualities of ignorant people. Still, it is essential in the initial stage to use examples of mundane objects to describe the Absolute, so that materially conditioned people, who are completely ignorant about the transcendental truth, can at least develop some idea of Transcendence. Both the colours black and white are mundane, yet the example of these colours has been given here to convey an idea of the bodily lustre of Śrī Kṛṣṇasundara and Śrī Gaurasundara.

The theories of mundane scientists also support the *siddhānta* expressed in this verse. Scientists say that black is not a colour, so the example of the colour black points to the truth that Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His bodily lustre, which resembles the colour black, is *nirguṇa*, i.e., completely beyond the material qualities. Even when Śrī Kṛṣṇa advents in this material world, He and His bodily lustre are completely beyond material qualities in all respects. Moreover, all of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's transcendental attributes are also *nirguṇa*, including His gravity, courtesy, His pridelessness, His respectfulness, cleverness, ever-youthfulness, His incomparable beauty, His expertise in relishing *rasa*, His virtues, His self-control and His extreme mercy.

Conversely, Śrī Gaurasundara's bodily lustre and all of His qualities are transcendental. That is why He is *saguṇa-tattva*, the Absolute Truth possessed of all qualities. Still, His qualities are also *nirguṇa*. Again, following the logic of the moon and the branch, a comparison is given here to illustrate *saguṇa-tattva*. Just as the sun is endowed with the combination of all colours, so Śrī Gaurasundara, who is endowed with a distinctive golden lustre, embodies all transcendental qualities. Thus, He is worshipful. When all the colours are mixed together, a golden

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hue manifests, in which the colours are not visible separately. For instance, the rays of the sun appear white, but sometimes in the rainy season we see a rainbow opposite the sun, and we can then see the sun's component seven colours separately. In English the acronym ROYGBIV is used to denote the following seven colours: R – red, O – orange, Y – yellow, G – green, B – blue, I – indigo, V – violet. Following this same logic, Śrī Gaurasundara's bodily lustre resembles molten gold because He embodies the combination of all transcendental qualities.

One day, when our most worshipful Śrīla Gurudeva was telling us *hari-kathā*, he related an incident that occurred when he went to Prayāga (Allahābāda) after Śrīla Prabhupāda's disappearance. He stayed there for a few days at the house of his dear friend and godbrother Śrī Abhaya Caraṇāravinda Prabhu, who introduced him to a well-known High Court advocate. This advocate was sharp-witted and a good logician, and he was deeply impressed on hearing the thoughts of Śrī Kṛtiratna Prabhu, who was a profound scholar of philosophy and an instructor of instructors. One day the advocate arrived at the house with a church bishop, who was a famous philosopher and preacher of Christianity. The advocate introduced the bishop to Kṛtiratna Prabhu, and for entertainment, he initiated a dialogue with him that led to an interesting argument using logic and counter-logic. During the discussion, the bishop turned to Kṛtiratna Prabhu and asked, "Why do you worship Kṛṣṇa who is coloured black?"

Showing his presence of mind, Śrīla Gurudeva immediately answered, "Black is not a colour. It is beyond all colours, which means that Kṛṣṇa is beyond all mundane qualities. We do not worship any worldly object or colour. *Nirguṇa-tattva* is not subject to the stages of birth, growth, decay and destruction. It is beyond the modes of goodness, passion and ignorance, and it is eternally existing. We worship Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is the ultimate limit of *nirguṇa-para-tattva*."

The bishop was an expert and sportive opponent, and immediately retorted, "Then why do you worship the fair-complexioned Śrī Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu?"

Śrīla Gurudeva answered so quickly that it seemed that he was waiting for the question. "All the qualities of the material nature are abominable and distressful. Beyond this, in the spiritual world, there is a treasure of transcendental virtuous qualities. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is the unlimited treasure house of all those transcendental qualities, and the mixture of those spiritual qualities is His bodily lustre. The combination of all the colours in sunlight appears white, but in fact it is a mixture of seven colours: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet. We see this in the rainy season, when the sun's light is refracted to make a rainbow, in which all the seven colours are easily visible. Similarly, our worshipful Śrī Gaurasundara embodies unlimited transcendental qualities." When the honourable bishop heard this irrefutable, scientific argument, he was struck dumb and became a little morose. Trying to conceal his discomfiture, he smiled and said, "You people worship a cowherd boy. I cannot understand this."

Śrīla Gurudeva replied, "Perhaps you do not understand because you worship a shepherd. If a shepherd can be worshipped, then why is it strange to worship the caretaker of cows, who nourish the whole world like mothers?" On hearing this, both the advocate and the bishop extolled Śrī Kṛtiratna Prabhu's eloquent speech and took their leave.

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Thus, the transcendental *saguṇa* and *nirguṇa* are an identical *tattva*. There is no difference between the two. There is no doubt at all that Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Śrī Gaurasundara are simultaneously *saguṇa-* and *nirguṇa-tattva*.

Verse 6

saguṇaṁ nirguṇaṁ tattvam
ekam evādvitīyakam
sarva-nitya-guṇair gauraḥ
kṛṣṇo rasastu nirguṇaiḥ

Constitutionally, both the *saguṇa-* and *nirguṇa-tattvas* are non-different from each other and are one without a second. Śrī Gaurasundara is *saguṇa-tattva*, the embodiment of unlimited, eternal, transcendental qualities. The omnipotent Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is devoid of and beyond every mundane mode, and who is the embodiment of all *rasas*, is *nirguṇa-tattva*. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is described everywhere in the scriptures as *rasa-svarūpa*, the very embodiment of *rasa*, and *rasika-śekhara*, the foremost relisher of *rasa*. *Rasa* is *nirguṇa-tattva*, or transcendental. It can never come under the influence of the mundane modes.

Tattva-prakāśikā-vṛtti

Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Śrī Gaura are one and the same worshipful Truth. This has been concluded here by comparing the word *varṇa* from the previous verse with the word *guṇa* in this verse. Intrinsically, *nirguṇa* Śrī Kṛṣṇa and *saguṇa* Śrī Gaurasundara are the equally worshipful *para-tattva* and cannot be distinguished from each other. They are both simultaneously *saguṇa-* and *nirguṇa-tattva*.

Some persons, ignorant of the Absolute Truth, consider *saguṇa* and *nirguṇa* to be two separate principles. They further conclude that they are completely opposite to each other; that *saguṇa-tattva* is under the influence of the material modes, and thus undesirable; and that *nirguṇa-tattva* is therefore superior to *saguṇa-tattva*. According to these people, *nirguṇa-tattva* refers to that formless *brahma* which is beyond the material world, which is devoid of attributes, unalloyed, without potency and formless. They say that this world is false and that the *jīva* is *brahma*. According to them, *saguṇa-tattva* is the stage in which *nirguṇa-tattva* manifests itself in the material world, endowed with a material name, a material form and material qualities. They consider Svayam Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Śrī Rāmacandra to be that *saguṇa-tattva*, whose appearance, disappearance and body are material and influenced by illusion.

The *Gītā* (9.11–12) and other authorized scriptures state that this doctrine is completely offensive:

avajānanti māṁ mūḍhā
mānuṣīṁ tanum āśritam
paraṁ bhāvam ajānanto
mama bhūta-maheśvaram

moghāśā mogha-karmāṇo
mogha-jñānā vicetasaḥ
rākṣasīm āsurīṁ caiva
prakṛtiṁ mohinīṁ śritāḥ

Fools deride Me, the Supreme Lord of all living entities. They fail to understand the supreme nature of My form by their human intelligence, which is bewildered by illusion. All the hopes, actions and knowledge of such fools go in vain. Their minds become agitated and, deviating from the spiritual path, they take shelter of the demoniac nature, which destroys intelligence, and they head towards the hellish planets.

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The conclusion is that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the root of all incarnations and is the Supreme Absolute Truth. In the form of Kṛṣṇa, He is the Lord of all lords, of all living beings and of the entire cosmic manifestation. Whatever He wills must take place. He is omniscient, omnipotent and supremely compassionate. Wicked King Veṇa and other such fools used to disrespect Kṛṣṇa when they saw Him. These fools used to abuse Vasudeva-nandana, or Nanda-nandana, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, considering Him a worldly man subject to death. These fools imagine that Paramātmā is a separate soul in Kṛṣṇa's body. This belief has been condemned everywhere in the scriptures, wherein Śrī Kṛṣṇa's form is established as eternal and full of knowledge and bliss (*sac-cid-ānanda*). *Śāstra* states that the distinction between the body (*deha*) and the possessor of the body (*dehī*) is also false in the case of the *sac-cid-ānanda śrī vigraha* of Bhagavān.

(a) *sac-cid-ānanda-rūpāya kṛṣṇāya* (*Gopāla-tāpani Upaniṣad* 1.1)
(b) *tam ekaṁ govindaṁ sac-cid-ānanda-vigraham* (*Gopāla-tāpani Upaniṣad* 1.33)
(c) *dvi-bhujaṁ jñāna-mudrāḍhyaṁ vana-mālinam īśvaram* (*Gopāla-tāpani Upaniṣad* 1.9)
(d) *īśvaraḥ paramaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ* (*Brahmā-saṁhita* 5.1)
(e) *apaśyaṁ gopām anipadyamānamā* (*Ṛg Veda* 1.22.164.31)
(f) *gūḍhaṁ paraṁ brahma manuṣya-liṅgam* (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.10.48)
(g) *yatrāvatīrṇo bhagavān paramātmā narākṛtiḥ* (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 9.23.20)
(h) *deha-dehi-bhidā nāsti īśvare vidyate kvacid*

Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa is unborn, yet by dint of His inconceivable potency, He is the eternal son of Śrī Nanda and Śrī Yaśodā. He is *nirguṇa*, yet He is ever youthful, the best of dancers, and He is dressed as a cowherd boy carrying a flute. He is equally disposed to all, and yet He is partial to His devotees who take exclusive shelter of Him. According to *viruddha dharmaṁ tasmin na citram*, all apparently contradictory and mutually exclusive qualities co-exist simultaneously within Bhagavān. Four-headed Brahmā and other demigods have referred to Him as being simultaneously *saguṇa* and *nirguṇa*.

Rāvaṇa thought that Śrī Rāmacandra was an ordinary human being, so he kidnapped Sītā-devī, His *svarūpa-śakti*, His internal potency. Śrī Rāmacandra later killed Rāvaṇa as well as all his demon followers and rescued Sītā-devī. Kaṁsa, Jarāsandha, Śiśupāla and other foolish kings thought that Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa was an ordinary human being. By His causeless mercy, Śrī Kṛṣṇa destroyed them, either personally with His disk Sudarśana or through His devotees, and established His divine position as *nirguṇa*, or above material qualities. Svayam Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa has said in the *Gītā* (10.10), "*dadāmi buddhi-yogaṁ taṁ yena mām upayānti te* – I give them the intelligence, the divine vision, by which they can come to Me." One cannot realize the Absolute Truth without the mercy of Bhagavān or His devotees. Hence, Śrī Kṛṣṇacandra and Śrī Gaurasundara are both equally worshipful as one and the same unparalleled and supreme *tattva*.

Verse 7

śrī-kṛṣṇaṁ mithunaṁ brahma
tyaktā tu nirguṇaṁ hi tat
upāsate mṛṣā vijñāḥ
yathā tuṣāvaghātinaḥ

Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Śrī Gaura are both the same supreme *brahma*. Those who abandon Their

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service to worship the formless *brahma* never attain factual liberation, and are precisely like those who try to extract rice by beating empty husks. All they obtain is their own fruitless, hard labour. Similarly, all seekers of empirical knowledge, who forsake the service of Śrī Kṛṣṇa to worship the *nirviśeṣa nirguṇa brahma*, simply perform fruitless hard labour. All their efforts go in vain.

Tattva-prakāśikā-vṛtti

The Vedas, Upaniṣads and especially *Vedānta-sūtra* describe only *bhakti*. The topic established by all these scriptures is Bhagavān and His *bhakti*. The word *jñāna* has not been mentioned even once in the five hundred and fifty aphorisms of *Vedānta-sūtra*. The *sūtra 'janmādy asya yataḥ'* (1.1.2) clearly states that Bhagavān is the creator, maintainer and destroyer of this cosmic manifestation. This proves the divine existence of His form, energies and transcendental qualities. The *sūtra 'arūpavadeva tat-pradhānatvāt'* (3.2.14) describes the transcendental form of *para-brahma*. The *sūtra 'ānandamayo 'bhyāsāt'* (1.1.12) confirms *para-brahma's* pleasurable pastimes and *'anāvṛttiḥ śabdād anāvṛttiḥ śabdāt'* (4.4.22) states that the only process to attain the Supreme Truth is *nāma-saṅkīrtana*. In the prayers of Śrī Brahmā in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.14.4), the cultivation of *nirviśeṣa-jñāna* has been forbidden:

śreyaḥ-sṛtiṁ bhaktim udasya te vibho
kliśyanti ye kevala-bodha-labdhaye
teṣām asau kleśala eva śiṣyate
nānyad yathā sthūla-tuṣāvaghātinām

O Prabhu, You are the ultimate auspiciousness, and *bhakti* is the best and only means to obtain You. The four types of desirable goals such as *mokṣa* are easily attained by performing *bhakti*, just as water continuously flows from a reservoir. When one performs *bhakti*, one is automatically situated in knowledge, so one need not endeavour to obtain *jñāna* separately. Those who abandon the path of *bhakti* and engage in distressing endeavours to achieve *jñāna* reap only suffering and nothing else, just as those who beat empty husks receive no reward but their own fruitless hard labour. They do not obtain any rice.

Furthermore in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.2.32):

ye 'nye 'ravindākṣa vimukta-māninas
tvayy asta-bhāvād aviśuddha-buddhayaḥ
āruhya kṛcchreṇa paraṁ padaṁ tataḥ
patanty adho 'nādṛta-yuṣmad-aṅghrayaḥ

O lotus-eyed one, those who are not Your devotees may consider themselves to be liberated by their performance of sense-control and severe *sādhana*, but their intelligence is not pure, because they are devoid of the sentiments of unalloyed devotion for You. As a result of neglecting Your lotus feet, which are the only shelter, they again fall down to a degraded condition.

The four Kumāras and Śrī Śukadeva previously worshipped the *nirguṇa nirākāra brahma*. However, by the mercy of Grandsire Brahmā and Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vedavyāsa, they became attracted to the worship of the *mithuna-brahma*, the Divine Couple, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. The special qualities and sweetness of this *mithuna-brahma* are so attractive that even *brahma-jñānīs* (seekers of empiric knowledge) discard their previous condition of being

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ātmārāma, absorbed in the pleasure of the *ātmā*, and become blissfully engaged in the worship of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa *mithuna-tattva*:

ātmārāmāś ca munayo
nirgranthā apy urukrame
kurvanty ahaitukīṁ bhaktim
itthaṁ-bhūta-guṇo hariḥ

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.7.10)

Liberated sages freed from all material attachments and absorbed in self-realization are attracted to the Supreme Lord Hari's transcendental qualities and desire to serve Him with pure devotion.

parinisṭhito 'pi nairguṇye
uttamaḥ-śloka-līlayā
gṛhīta-cetā rājarṣe
ākhyānaṁ yad adhītavān

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (2.1.9)

Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī personally testified in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, "I myself was firmly situated in the worship of *nirguṇa-brahma*, but by the mercy of Śrīla Vyāsadeva, I was inspired to engage in the nectarean worship of the Divine Couple, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa."

The result of worshipping *nirguṇa-brahma* is liberation (*mukti*). A one-pointed devotee never accepts such *mukti*, even if it is offered by Bhagavān. He desires to be engaged in the loving devotional service of Bhagavān forever. Great *brahma-jñānīs* occasionally attain *mukti* by their hard austerities and severe *sādhana*, yet that same *mukti* is attained very easily by outright demons when they are killed by Bhagavān Himself. So who but a fool would vainly endeavour to achieve such a condemned and low class of liberation? Wise devotees never accept such undesirable *mukti* even if Bhagavān Himself offers it to them.

Verse 8

śrī-vinoda-bihārī yo
rādhayāḥ milito yadā
tada āhaṁ vandanaṁ kuryāṁ
sarasvatī-prasādataḥ

By the causeless grace of my *gurudeva*, Śrīla Sarasvatī Prabhupāda, I worship Śrī Vinoda-bihārī Śrī Kṛṣṇa, when, upon meeting with Śrīmatī Rādhikā, He becomes one with Her.

Tattva-prakāśikā-vṛtti

This verse reveals yet another of its author's confidential moods. The purport of 'when Śrī Vinoda-bihārī is meeting with Śrīmatī Rādhikā' has been thoroughly explained in the first verse. When Kṛṣṇa is deeply absorbed in remembering Śrīmatī Rādhikā, His effulgence takes on a golden hue. Alternatively, the poet is bowing down again and again to *rādhāliṅgita* Śrī Vinoda-bihārī, the form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa whose bluish effulgence has been covered by the golden lustre of Śrīmatī Rādhikā when She embraces Him in union after separation. The underlying meaning is to pray exclusively to *mithuna-brahma* Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Vinoda-bihārī, the divine form of *rasarāja-mahābhāva*. *Sarasvatī-prasādataḥ* means 'by the causeless mercy of my *gurudeva*'. The name of his *gurudeva* is Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī. The word 'Sarasvatī' has two meanings: (1) the presiding deity of *aparā-vidyā*, worldly knowledge, and (2) the presiding deity of *parā-vidyā*, transcendental knowledge. Śrī Sarasvatī Ṭhākura is non-different from the presiding deity of *parā-vidyā*. Thus, without his mercy it is impossible to worship *śrī rādhāliṅgita-vigraha*.

Another confidential meaning is '*tadā ahaṁ śrī-vinoda-bihārī vandanaṁ kuryāt* – I worship the divine form of Śrī Vinoda-bihārī-rādhāliṅgita'. The name Śrī Vinoda-bihārī has

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been given to the poet by his *gurudeva*. In addition to this, the name of his eternal spiritual form is Śrī Vinoda Mañjarī. This is evident from his *praṇāma-mantra*: *gaurāśraya-vigrahāya kṛṣṇa-kāmaika-cāriṇe / rūpānuga-pravarāya vinodeti svarūpiṇe*. Thus, in this prayer the poet aspires to be eternally engaged in his perfected spiritual body in the permanent service to that Śrī Kṛṣṇa who is embraced by Śrīmatī Rādhikā. The realization of such a rarely fulfilled aspiration is impossible without the mercy of *śrī gurudeva*, the condensed embodiment of mercy and compassion: *śrī-guru-caraṇe rati, ei se uttamā-gati / je prasāde pūre sarva āśā*.

Verse 9

iti tattvāṣṭakaṁ nityaṁ
yaḥ paṭhet śraddhayānvitaḥ
kṛṣṇa-tattvam abhijñāya
gaura-pade bhaven matiḥ

Whoever daily recites this *tattvāṣṭakam* with great faith will fully comprehend *śrī kṛṣṇa-tattva*, and will develop divine love for the lotus feet of Śrī Gaurasundara.

Śrī Maṅgala-āratī

We stated earlier that our most revered *śrīla gurupāda-padma* was a *rasika* poet as well as a self-realized philosopher. I [the author] shall now present some verses from his *Maṅgala-āratī* song, by which we can easily understand how *rasika* a poet he really was. In this song, he has described Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's *niśānta-līlā*, Their pastimes at the end of night, in a confidential way. Ordinary *sādhakas* cannot imbibe these profound emotions into their hearts; only some elevated *rāgānuga* Vaiṣṇavas can understand these meanings.

The eternal pastimes of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa have been divided into eight periods (*aṣṭa-kālīya-līlā*) so that *rāgānuga-sādhakas* can remember and contemplate them: (1) *niśānta*, the end of the night; (2) *prātaḥ*, dawn; (3) *pūrvāhna*, morning; (4) *madhyāhna*, midday; (5) *aparāhna*, early afternoon; (6) *sāyaṁ*, evening; (7) *pradoṣa*, first part of the night; and (8) *madhya-rātri-līlā*, pastimes in the middle of night.

Maṅgala-āratī is connected with *niśānta-līlā*, the pastimes of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Yugala that take place in the last part of night before dawn. Descriptions of *niśānta-līlā* are found in *Śrī Sanatkumāra-saṁhita*, in *Padma Purāṇa* (*Pātāla-khaṇḍa*) and in the books of the Gosvāmīs. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has described these eightfold pastimes in a condensed form, while Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī has described them in detail in his *Śrī Govinda-līlāmṛta*, as has Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura in his *Śrī Kṛṣṇa-bhāvanāmṛta*. Here we shall give a very brief overview of *niśānta-līlā*.

Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Yugala are tired after Their midnight pastimes, and are sleeping in a charming *kuñja*, or forest bower. Some special *sakhīs*, carrying in their hands the articles and ingredients required for their service at that time, are waiting for Śrī Yugala-Kiśora to wake up. The cool and gentle early morning breeze, kissing each and every flower, has become intoxicated with Their fragrance and is now moving unsteadily. Buzzing bumblebees wake up quickly and roam from flower to flower, also kissing them. The whole atmosphere of Vṛndāvana is becoming enchanted by the aroma of these blossoming flowers.

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"Many different Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* in the Śrī Gauḍīya *sampradāya* have written *maṅgala-āratī* songs ... However, my most worshipful *śrīla gurudeva's maṅgala-āratī* has its own unprecedented and unique speciality. By singing this *maṅgala-āratī* one is infused with the moods of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's *niśānta-līlā* in a way which cannot be found anywhere else."

Śrī Vṛndā-devī becomes worried when she sees Yugala Kiśora-Kiśorī still sleeping. "*Aho!* The sun is just about to rise now, and this Couple is still sleeping, happily bound to each other in tight embrace." Seeing this, she becomes worried and orders Vṛndāvana's birds, such as *śuka-sārī* (the male and female parrots), the cuckoos, peacocks and *papīhās*, "Wake Them up with your sweet songs, otherwise They will be put into embarrassment when everyone else wakes up." As soon as the birds hear Śrī Vṛndā-devī's orders, they all sing in their sweet voices about the Divine Couple Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's pastimes and begin to wake Them up.

Meanwhile, some of the *prāṇa-preṣṭha-sakhīs* become enchanted while peering through a small opening in the bushes of the *kuñja*. In their jubilation upon seeing the incomparable, lustrous beauty of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, they begin to perform *āratī* with their eyes. Although the Divine Couple have been awakened by the sweet chirping of the birds, They do not want to get up from Their bed, for fear of losing the happiness of Their deep embrace. At last, on the request of the male and female parrots, They sit up. *Svādhīna-bhartṛkā*[2] Śrīmatī Rādhikā requests Her dear-most Śrī Kṛṣṇa to rearrange Her garments and ornaments, and *dhīra-lalita*[3] Kṛṣṇa, complies with Her request.

The *sakhīs* then enter the *kuñja*. They approach the Divine Couple and sweetly conversing (*rasālāpa*), they begin their respective services. Suddenly, the female monkey Kakkhaṭī loudly calls out, "Jaṭilā!" Upon hearing this, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa become anxious due to the mellow of transcendental fear and longing. They return to Their respective homes, and sleep for some time. Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī's condensed verse is as follows:

rātryante trasta-vṛnderita
bahu-viravair bodhitau kīraśārī-
padyair-hṛdyair api sukha-
śayanād utthitau tau sakhībhiḥ
dṛṣṭau hṛṣṭau tadā tvoditarati-
lalitau kakkhaṭī-gīḥ saśaṅkau
rādhā-kṛṣṇau satṛṣṇāv api nija-
nija-dhāmny āpta talpau smarāmi

Many different Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* in the Śrī Gauḍīya *sampradāya* have written *maṅgala-āratī* songs of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Yugala. However, my most worshipful *śrīla gurudeva's maṅgala-āratī* has its own unprecedented and unique speciality. By singing this *maṅgala-āratī* one is infused with the moods of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's *niśānta-līlā* in a way which cannot be found anywhere else. The song goes as follows:

2 Editor: the heroine who happily controls Her lover
3 Editor: the hero who is very cunning and youthful, expert in joking, carefree and subservient to his girlfriend

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maṅgala śrī-guru-gaura
maṅgala mūrati
maṅgala śrī-rādhā-kṛṣṇa-
yugala-pīriti (1)

All glories to the auspicious forms of *śrī guru* and Śrī Gaurasundara, and all glories to Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's auspicious amorous love.

maṅgala niśānta-līlā
maṅgala udaye
maṅgala ārati jāge
bhakata hṛdaye (2)

All glories to Their auspicious *niśānta-līlā*, which heralds the end of night and to Their auspicious awakening, which brings auspiciousness to all! Glories to *maṅgala-āratī*, which awakens in the devotees' hearts.

tomāra nidrāya jīva
nidrita dharāya
tava jāgaraṇe viśva
jāgarita haya (3)

While You sleep, the *jīvas* lie sleeping deep in their ignorance, but upon Your rising, the whole world awakens. (If You manifest in their hearts, then all *tattva* and all *siddhānta* will be revealed to them).

śubha-dṛṣṭi kara prabhu
jagatera prati
jāguka hṛdaye mora
sumaṅgalā rati (4)

Please bestow Your kind glance upon the world and awaken in my heart that most auspicious *rati*.

mayūra-śukādi sāri
kata pikarāja
maṅgala jāgara hetu
kariche virāja (5)

The peacocks, parrots and cuckoos all exist solely to sing for Your auspicious awakening.

sumadhura dhvani kare
jata śākhī-gaṇa
maṅgala śravaṇe bāje
madhura kūjana (6)

Sitting in the branches of the trees, all the birds sing their supremely sweet morning melodies, which resound throughout the forest. Those sweet, soft, auspicious sounds grace everyone.

kusumita sarovare
kamala-hillola
maṅgala saurabha bahe
pavana kallola (7)

Varieties of flowers, with lotuses in the centre, fill the pond and sway with the waves. Breezes carry auspicious aromas of pure delight and joy everywhere.

jhāṁjhara kāṁsara ghaṇṭā
śaṅkha karatāla
maṅgala mṛdaṅga bāje
parama rasāla (8)

Large cymbals, gongs, bells, conches, *karatālas* and auspicious *mṛdaṅgas* play the supreme *rasa*.

maṅgala ārati kare
bhakatera gaṇa
abhāgā keśava kare
nāma-saṅkīrtana (9)

Performing *maṅgala-āratī* in the company of devotees, Śrī Keśava dāsa sings *nāma-saṅkīrtana*.

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The *jīva* is constitutionally a servant of the Supreme Lord. Unfortunately, the *jīva* who has fallen into this illusory world, being averse to Bhagavān since time immemorial, is burnt by the threefold miseries in the cycle of repeated birth and death. Only by great fortune does the *jīva* take shelter at the lotus feet of a *sad-guru* and follow the path of pure *bhakti*. At that time he realizes that *śrī gurudeva*, Śrī Gaurasundara and Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Yugala are the embodiment of auspiciousness for the whole world. The ultimate goal of the living entity is to attain *prema* for the lotus feet of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. The life of that person in whose heart *prema* for Them has arisen is actually successful. This condition is the ultimate good fortune of all living entities.

By the mercy of the all-auspicious Bhagavān and His devotee, when a practitioner of *bhakti* goes on performing pure *bhakti*, he gradually crosses successive stages such as *śraddhā*, *niṣṭhā*, *ruci* and *āsakti*. At this point, *śuddha-sattva*, which is the combined essence of the *hlādinī* and *saṁvit* aspects of the *svarūpa-śakti*, automatically manifests in the heart. Then, that fortunate *sādhaka's* pure intrinsic spiritual form, name, mood and other aspects are also revealed in his heart.

By the association of devotees who are *tattva-jña* (well-versed in the conclusion of scripture) and *rasika*, he is naturally attracted to perform *nāma-kīrtana* with great feeling and to remember *aṣṭa-kālīya-līlā*. Only in the heart of a living entity who has received such good fortune is *maṅgala niśānta-līlā* manifested. The same love-laden *maṅgala-āratī* that the *priya-narma-sakhīs* perform in the transcendental abode of Vṛndāvana during Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Yugala's *niśānta-līlā* is specifically bestowed upon the heart of such a *sādhaka*. This auspicious *rati* does not manifest without the mercy of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa or Their associates, and until this auspicious *rati* is manifested, the transcendental *maṅgala-āratī* will also not manifest itself. Therefore, the *bhakti-sādhaka* prays piteously in great distress to receive such good fortune (Verses 1–4).

This prayer causes the auspicious *āratī* of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Yugala to manifest in the heart of the *rāgānuga-sādhaka*. Losing external consciousness of his body and this world, he sees with his eternal form *mayūra-śukādi sāri kata pikarāja / maṅgala jāgara hetu kariche virāja* (Verse 5).

Dawn is quickly approaching. In some pleasure grove such as Saṅketa, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Yugala are still asleep, locked in each others' embrace. Afraid that everyone will soon wake up, Vṛndā-devī inspires the birds, such as the peacocks, male and female parrots, cuckoos and *papīhā*, to awaken the Divine Couple. All the birds in the water and on the land start calling in their sweet voices. The description of this pastime in *Śrī Govinda-līlāmṛta* (1.13) is most heart-touching:

drākṣāsu sāryaḥ karakeṣu kīrāḥ
jaguḥ pikībhiś ca pikā rasāle
pīlau kapotāḥ priyake mayūrāḥ
latāsu bhṛṅgā bhuvi tāmracūḍāḥ

Female parrots on the grape-vines, male parrots on the pomegranate trees, cuckoos on the branches of the mango trees, male and female pigeons in the *pīlū* trees, male and female peacocks in the *kadamba* trees, male and female bumblebees on the creepers and roosters on the ground – all are singing sweetly.

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The male and female peacocks start crying their sweet *'ke-kā'*. The male peacocks call out *'ke'* – "The patience, shyness and chastity of Śrīmatī Rādhikā, who is the personification of *mahābhāva*, are like a tall mountain. Who can crush that mountain to powder? Only Kṛṣṇa!" Then the peahens reply *'kā'* – "Śrī Kṛṣṇa is like a mad elephant, sporting with His beloved in the waves of *prema*. Who can control that maddened elephant with the goad of Her love? Only Śrīmatī Rādhikā!"

Swarms of bumblebees blow Cupid's conch as they buzz from one flower to another. Parrots like Dakṣa and Vicakṣaṇa, and female parrots such as Śubhā and Mañjubhāṣiṇī awaken the Divine Couple by heralding the auspicious dawn. Although Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are awakened by the sweet calling of these birds, They still remain in a tight embrace with Their eyes closed, fearing that the pleasure of that embrace may vanish.

The line *maṅgala śravaṇe bāje madhura kūjana* (Verse 6) can have many profound purports. The first meaning is that the sweet calls (*kūjana*) of the birds on the branches of different trees enter the ears of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa as a sweet but indistinct auspicious sound. The second meaning is that the sweet sound of the birds enters the ears of the *priya-narma-sakhīs*, who are waiting for Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa to wake up. There is another very confidential meaning of the word *kūjana*. At the time of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's amorous pastimes, Their *rati-vilāsa*, They converse together and exchange sweet joking words. When this *kūjana* enters the ears of the *priya-narma-sakhīs*[4], they become overwhelmed with love.

4 Editor: in this instance *priya-narma-sakhīs* refers to the *mañjarīs*

Intoxicated bumblebees are humming everywhere in Vṛndāvana, which is full of many varieties of jasmine flowers, such as *belī*, *camelī*, *jūhī*, *yūthikā*, *mallikā*, *mālatī*, *jātī* and *kunda*. The clear ponds of fresh, sweet water are dense with lotuses swarming with humming bumblebees. These lotuses sway at the touch of the cool, gentle breezes, and they dance in overwhelming jubilation when waves arise in the pond.

In the midst of all this, everyone hears the name 'Jaṭilā'. Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Yugala and Their *sakhīs*, full of suspense and eagerness, immediately get ready to leave the *kuñja* to go to Their respective homes.

At this very moment, the internal absorption of the *sādhaka* breaks and he comes back to external consciousness. Grief overwhelms him, but just then the bell starts ringing in the temple room for the *āratī* of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Yugala. The doors open and with deep sentiment the devotees start performing the *āratī* of the youthful Divine Couple. As the devotees sing *maṅgala-āratī* and dance, their melodious voices combine with the sweet sounds of *jhāṁjhara*, *kāṁsara*, *ghaṇṭā*, *śaṅkha*, *karatāla* and *mṛdaṅga*. Inspired by his previous absorption in *niśānta-līlā*, the author of this poem also starts to perform *nāma-saṅkīrtana* with the rest of the devotees. As he sings each verse of the *kīrtana*, the *bhāvas* of *niśānta-līlā* appear in his heart, soothing his grief.

I have tried to reveal some of the heartfelt moods of *paramārādhya* Śrīla Gurudeva, following *śākhā-candra-nyāya*, the logic of the moon on the branch, but I know that I am incapable of collecting even one drop from his fathomless, endless ocean of *rasa*. May Śrīla Gurupāda-padma bestow his causeless grace upon this useless servant, so that I may one day become qualified for this.

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Śrīla Prabhupāda āratī

Paramārādhyatama Śrīla Gurudeva composed an exquisite *āratī* in honour of his worshipful *gurudeva*, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda. When it was published in *Śrī Gauḍīya-patrikā*, all of Śrīla Prabhupāda's disciples and grand-disciples became delighted to read it. Everyone started giving thanks, either in person or indirectly. Some of the *ācāryas* of the Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha could not curb their greed to publish it in their respective magazines, omitting Śrīla Gurudeva's name. From then onwards, all the Gauḍīya Maṭha devotees began to sing Śrīla Gurudeva's *āratī-kīrtana* at the time of Śrīla Prabhupāda's *āratī*.

jaya jaya prabhupādera
ārati nehārī
yoga-māyāpura-nitya-
sevā-dānakārī (1)

All glories, all glories to the *āratī* ceremony of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda, which bestows eternal service at the Yogapīṭha in Māyāpura upon those who observe it.

sarvatra pracāra-dhūpa
saurabha manohara
baddha-mukta alikūla
mugdha carācara (2)

Like the enchanting fragrance of incense, his preaching has spread everywhere, astonishing all devotees, both liberated and conditioned, and all living entities, both moving and non-moving.

bhakati-siddhānta-dīpa
jāliyā jagate
pañca-rasa-sevā-śikhā
pradīpta tāhāte (3)

He lit up the entire world with the lamp of the perfect conclusions of pure devotion (*bhakti-siddhānta*). This lamp is composed of five brilliantly glowing flames, which represent service in the five primary *rasas*.

pañca mahādīpa yathā
pañca mahājyotiḥ
triloka-timira-nāśe
avidyā durmati (4)

The five flames of the *āratī* lamp are like five radiant lights that represent the five *rasas* and that destroy the darkness of ignorance and crooked intelligence throughout the three worlds.

bhakati-vinoda-dhārā
jala śaṅkha-dhāra
niravadhi bahe tāhā
rodha nāhi āra (5)

The water in the conch shell is the conception of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, which even today flows continually and which cannot be checked by anyone.

sarva-vādya-mayī ghaṇṭā
bāje sarva-kāla
bṛhat-mṛdaṅga-vādya
parama rasāla (6)

Kṛṣṇa-kīrtana, which is accompanied by *karatālas*, bells and other instruments, resounds for all time, but really it is the printing press, known as the *bṛhad-mṛdaṅga*, which distributes the supreme *rasa* in all directions.

viśāla lalāṭe śobhe
tilaka ujjvala
gala-deśe tulasī-mālā
kare jhalamala (7)

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Resplendent *tilaka* adorns his broad forehead, and around his neck shines a necklace of *tulasī* beads.

ājānu-lambita bāhū
dīrgha kalevara
tapta kāñcana-baraṇa
parama sundara (8)

With his long arms extending to his knees, his towering figure, and his complexion like molten gold, he is supremely beautiful.

lalita-lāvaṇya mukhe
sneha-bharā hāsī
aṅga kānti śobhe jaiche
nitya pūrṇa śaśī (9)

His charming, lovely face displays a smile which is full of affection, and the beauty of his bodily complexion is like a perpetually full moon.

yati-dharme paridhāne
aruṇa-vasana
mukta kaila medhāvṛta
gauḍīya gagana (10)

Attired in daybreak-coloured cloth, which signifies the religious principles of *sannyāsa*, he nullified the misconceptions which were like clouds covering the clear Gauḍīya sky, and established the doctrine of pure *bhakti*.

bhakati-kusume kata
kuñja viracita
saundarye-saurabhe tāra
viśva āmodita (11)

His many temples are like splendid *kuñjas* filled with aromatic *bhakti* flowers (his *bhaktas*). The beauty and fragrance of these *kuñjas* delight the entire universe.

sevādarśe narahari
cāmara ḍhūlāya
keśava ati ānande
nirājana gāya (12)

As Narahari Prabhu, the ideal servant, fans Śrīla Prabhupāda with a *cāmara*, Keśava dāsa sings this *āratī* song with great delight.

Pūjyapāda tridaṇḍi-svāmī Śrīmad Bhakti Bhūdeva Śrautī Mahārāja was one of the prominent *tridaṇḍī-sannyāsīs* who took shelter of *jagad-guru* Śrīla Prabhupāda. He was expert in scriptures such as the Vedas, the Upaniṣads, the Purāṇas, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *Gītā*, and he was deeply respected in the Sārasvata Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya*. When he read this *āratī-kīrtana*, he immediately came to Śrī

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Dhāma Navadvīpa from his *maṭha* in Jhāḍagrāma (in Medinīpura district) and congratulated Śrīla Gurudeva: "Mahārāja, it is very surprising that we could not recognize you until now, although we were living closely together in Śrīla Gurudeva's *āśrama* for such a long time. Your heart is so full of pure *bhakti* and such *guru-niṣṭhā* (profound and unflinching faith for *śrīla gurudeva*), but we could not catch even the slightest scent of it.

"We thought that you were only expert in managing and other worldly tasks, but all our conceptions about you have been proved wrong. Today, by great fortune, it seems that Śrīla Prabhupāda is adoring your incomparable *guru-niṣṭhā* and the unmatched quality of your *bhakti*. I think that he is personally sitting in your heart and manifesting through you these wonderful moods of pure *bhakti*, which are full of beautiful *siddhāntas*. You are glorious. We hope that you will continue to bestow limitless benefit upon the world by composing more unprecedented poems, prayers, essays and articles in the future."

We will now explain some of the deep moods contained in the stanzas of this *āratī*.

Verse 1. *Yoga-māyāpura-nitya-sevā-dānakārī.* The topmost part of Goloka is called Vraja, Vṛndāvana or Gokula and next to it is Śvetadvīpa, or Navadvīpa. In the heart of this Navadvīpa-dhāma is Śrī Dhāma Māyāpura. Here, Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa, having accepted the bodily lustre and intrinsic moods of Śrīmatī Rādhikā, comes as Śrī Śacīnandana Gaurahari and relishes various types of *bhāvas* with His eternal associates. It is very rare for *jīvas* to attain the great fortune of entering the most munificent *śrī gaura-līlā*. Nayana Mañjarī of *śrī kṛṣṇa-līlā* is Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Ṭhākura in *śrī gaura-līlā*. His eternal form is described in his *praṇāma-mantra*.

śrī-vārṣabhānavi-devi-
dayitāya kṛpābdhaye
kṛṣṇa-sambandha-vijñāna-
dāyine prabhave namaḥ

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura as Śrī Nayana Mañjarī is the most dear *sakhī* of Vṛṣabhānu-nandinī Śrīmatī Rādhikā, who is Śrī Kṛṣṇa's beloved and the embodiment of *unnatojjvala-madhura-rasa*. To those who take shelter of him, he awards the rare gift of eternal service to the ocean of compassion, Śrī Śacīnandana Gaurahari. Śrīla Prabhupāda, who is the best among the followers of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, also mercifully bestows the rarely obtained service of Śrī Gaurahari upon those who perform or even witness this *āratī*. This *āratī* is extraordinary and transcendental, and has unique and distinctive features, not seen in other *āratīs*.

Verse 2. Śrīla Prabhupāda propagated pure *bhakti* and established preaching centres all over the world by sending his *brahmacārīs*, *sannyāsīs*, disciples and grand-disciples to the nine islands of Navadvīpa, then to all the important cities, and even to mountains and forests, all over India and around the globe. By the aroma of his nectarean preaching, all kinds of conditioned and liberated *jīvas* were and are attracted to follow *śuddha-bhakti*. In ordinary *arcana*, incense is offered first to the deity. The fragrance of that incense is confined to the temple, whereas the aroma of the preaching of pure *bhakti* delights and attracts the whole world. This is the transcendental distinction of the incense of preaching *śuddha-bhakti*.

If Śrīla Sarasvatī Prabhupāda had not propagated pure *bhakti* everywhere, then the whole world would have remained completely deprived, and thus inauspicious. People from West Bengal and other parts of India, also, would

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have been completely deprived of *śuddha-bhakti*, that is, *rāgānuga-bhakti* and especially *rūpānuga-bhakti*. His means of preaching, which was to publish and distribute *bhakti* literature, is unprecedented; it was never heard of or seen before. In this way, he created a new wave of the *bhakti* revolution throughout the world. Far from India, in large and small countries in both the West and the East, small children, young boys and girls, men, women and old people can be seen completely immersed in the Vedic culture. One can see them everywhere in these countries, holding a *japa-mala* in their hands, and wearing *tilaka* and *śikhās*. Dancing to the beat of *mṛdaṅga* and *karatālas*, they perform *nāma-saṅkīrtana* in their homes, in their temples and on the streets. Huge temples of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, Śrī Gaura-Nityānanda, Śrī Jagannātha-Baladeva-Subhadrā and other deities have been established around the world. All this is the contribution of the *mahāpuruṣa*, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda.

Verse 3. In the worship of the deity, the ghee lamp (*dīpa*) is offered after the incense. In this unique worship, the wicks of the lamp are the philosophical conclusions of *bhakti*. The *bhakti* doctrines are ten in number (*daśa-mūla-tattva*):

(1) Scriptures such as *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* which have been accepted by the *guru-paramparā* are the best *pramāṇa*, or authentic evidence.
(2) Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Absolute Truth.
(3) He is *sarva-śaktimān*, the possessor and master of all potencies.
(4) He is the reservoir of all the *rasas*.
(5) Both the conditioned and liberated souls are His *vibhinnāṁśa-tattva*, His separated parts and parcels.
(6) Conditioned souls are controlled by *māyā*.
(7) Liberated souls are free from *māyā*.
(8) The spiritual and material worlds are manifestations of Śrī Hari, and are inconceivably and simultaneously one with Him and different from Him.
(9) *Bhakti* is the only means of *sādhana*.
(10) Love of Kṛṣṇa is the only goal.

These ten doctrines of *bhakti* are like roots and medicinal herbs, and the essential juice of these roots and herbs is the ghee that burns in the wicks of this ghee lamp. The five great wicks are the five types of *sthāyībhāva*, and the five types of *rasa* – *śānta, dāsya, sakhya, vātsalya* and *madhura* – are the five flames.

Verse 4. The rays of these effulgent flames are *vibhāva, anubhāva, sāttvika* and *vyabhicārī*. The darkness of ignorance of the three worlds is destroyed forever by the powerful effulgence of this ghee lamp, characterized by the five transcendental tongues of flame. When the conditioned souls see this effulgence, the darkness of their corrupt intelligence and aversion to Kṛṣṇa is dispelled. Thus the effect of this extraordinary lamp completely destroys darkness, or ignorance. Who lit this lamp in the present age? The lamp of the *siddhāntas* of *bhakti* was ignited by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.

Verse 5. After incense and the ghee lamp, water is offered in a conch shell. Here, the conch shell is *bhakti-vinodana*, the transcendental delight (*vinodana*) of devotion. (In other words, the conch shell is Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura.) The water in the conch shell is the pure and fragrant flow of *śrī rūpānuga-bhakti* released by *bhakti-bhagīratha* Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. The current flows from this conch shell eternally and uninterruptedly, like an unbroken stream of oil, and will continue to flow in the future as well;

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this current of *bhakti* will never be interrupted. The stream of water from this conch shell will continue to shower fortunate souls in this world, so that they drown in *bhagavat-rasa*.

Verse 6. The bell is very important in the worship of the deity. While offering incense, lamp and other items, it is essential to ring the bell, which is *sarva-vādya-mayī*, the sum total of all musical sounds. The role of the bell, which keeps ringing eternally in this extraordinary *āratī*, is also quite unique. This transcendental bell is powerful *hari-kathā*. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's whole life was permeated with *hari-kathā*; indeed, he was the embodiment of *hari-kathā*. His *hari-kathā* would never stop, not even for a moment. It would automatically start to flow, even when he saw innocent children or trees and plants. His *hari-kathā* was so potent and effective that anyone who heard it would immediately become inspired with *bhakti*.

Kīrtana is also essential in the performance of *arcana*. Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī has written in his *Krama-sandarbha* commentary on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.5.23–24, "*yadyapy anyā bhakti kalau karttavyā tadā tat (kīrtanākhyā bhakti) saṁyogenaiva* – If a person executes other limbs of *bhakti*, he should perform *harināma-saṅkīrtana* at the same time. In Kali-yuga, performing any *sādhana* independent of *saṅkīrtana* will not bear any fruit." Thus it is essential to perform *kīrtana* while doing *arcana*. *Saṅkīrtana* is divided into different types, such as *nāma-kīrtana*, *rūpa-kīrtana*, *guṇa-kīrtana* and *līlā-kīrtana*. Amongst these, *nāma-kīrtana* is the best of all: *tāra madhye sarva-śreṣṭha nāma-saṅkīrtana* (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Antya-līlā* 4.71).

The *mṛdaṅga* is another essential part of *saṅkīrtana*. The contribution of the *bṛhad-mṛdaṅga*, that is, the printing press, is of utmost importance in the *āratī* propagated by Śrīla Prabhupāda. The sound of an ordinary *mṛdaṅga* is very limited, but the *bhakti* literature published by the *bṛhad-mṛdaṅga* reaches every corner of the world. It enters the heart of practising devotees and makes them dance in the ecstasy of *harināma-saṅkīrtana*. The sound of this *bṛhad-mṛdaṅga* never stops. It eternally arises in the heart of the devotees and keeps inspiring them. All glories and victory to the *āratī* of Śrīla Prabhupāda, who has established this *bṛhad-mṛdaṅga*!

Verses 7 and 8. In this *āratī-kīrtana*, *paramārādhyatama* Śrīla Gurudeva has described the divine beauty of *oṁ viṣṇupāda* Śrī Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda's transcendental body. "My most worshipful Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda is most dear to Śrīmatī Rādhikā as Śrī Nayana Mañjarī. However, out of humility, he has manifested his name in this world as Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī, covering his previous name, form and so on. Thus he has shown the ideal of *tṛṇād api sunīcena*, being more humble than a blade of grass.

"His broad forehead is beautified by *urddhva puṇḍra tilaka*. Three strands of *tulasī* beads shine brilliantly around his neck. His long arms reach down to his knees, his stature is tall, he has beautiful and well-built limbs, and his bodily complexion defeats the lustre of pure gold. All these symptoms of a *mahāpuruṣa* announce in unison that he is a great personality.

Verses 9–12. "An affectionate smile is always playing on his charming and lustrous lips. He has adopted saffron-coloured garments such as *doṛ-kaupīna*, *bahirvāsa* and *uttarīya* according to *sannyāsa-dharma*. The illuminating light from these garments has destroyed the dense darkness of the clouds that covered the Gauḍīya sky after

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the disappearance of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura and Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa Prabhu. He has established *śuddha-bhakti* preaching centres all over India and abroad. These preaching centres are like the pleasure groves (*vilāsa-kuñjas*) of Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa. Fashioned from the flowers of the *bhakti-latā*, their beauty and fragrance delights the whole world.

"This *āratī* of Śrīla Prabhupāda is eternally present in Śrī Māyāpura-dhāma. His dear-most Śrī Narahari Sevā-vigraha Prabhu is fanning Śrīla Prabhupāda with a *cāmara*. In this way, Śrī Keśava is blissfully performing the *āratī-kīrtana*."

Today, Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas everywhere affectionately sing this beautiful *āratī-kīrtana* composed by Śrīla Gurudeva.

Śrī Tulasī parikramā and āratī

For some time, the Śrī Gauḍīya Sārasvata Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya* had no *kīrtana* to sing at the time of *śrī tulasī-parikramā* and *āratī*. Some devotees used to sing Śrī Kṛṣṇadāsa's *tulasī kṛṣṇa preyasī namo namaḥ / vilāsa-kuñja diyo vāsa*. This is appropriate for highly elevated *rāgānuga-sādhakas*, but not for *vaidhī-bhakti-sādhakas* who do not possess the greed to reside in the *vilāsa-kuñja*.

Others used to sing Candraśekhara's *namo re namo re maiyā namo nārāyaṇi*. This is appropriate for Vaiṣṇavas of the Śrī Rāmānuja *sampradāya*, because in this song Tulasī-devī is addressed as the queen of Śrī Nārāyaṇa, or Śrī Śālagrāma, who resides in Vaikuṇṭha. Śrī Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas worship Śrī Vṛndā-devī as the most dear *sakhī* of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. She is the presiding deity of Vṛndāvana-dhāma, the topmost section of Goloka, and she is expert in arranging for Their intimate pastimes (*līlā-vilāsa*). She gave her beautiful land of Vṛndāvana to her most dear *sakhī*, Vṛṣabhānu-nandinī Śrīmatī Rādhikā. The intimate meetings of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and Their other pastimes in the *kuñjas* become successful only with the help of Śrī Vṛndā-devī. Tulasī, who is dear to Śrī Nārāyaṇa in Vaikuṇṭha, is the *vaibhava-prakāśa* of Vṛndā-devī. The original Vṛndā-devī can never be the queen of Śrī Nārāyaṇa, or of Śrī Śālagrāma. Thus, Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas worship her in the form of Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa's beloved *sakhī* in Vṛndāvana.

For all these reasons, *paramārādhya* Śrīla Gurudeva felt the need for an appropriate prayer which ordinary *sādhakas* of the Śrī Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya* could offer at the time of *tulasī-parikramā* and *āratī*. The Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas accept Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and Śrī Gaurahari as one non-dual *para-tattva*, and Śrīla Gurudeva has included this *siddhānta* in the beautiful prayer that he composed. The whole of the Sārasvata Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya* has accepted this prayer, which is complete in all respects and brimming with philosophical conclusions. The prayer is as follows:

namo namaḥ
tulasī kṛṣṇa-preyasī
(namo namaḥ)
rādhā-kṛṣṇa nitya-sevā—
ei abhilāṣī (1)

je tomāra śaraṇa laya,
sei kṛṣṇa sevā pāya,
kṛpā kori koro tāre
vṛndāvana-vāsī
tulasī kṛṣṇa-preyasī
(namo namaḥ) (2)

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tomāra caraṇe dhari,
more anugata kari',
gaurahari-sevā-magna
rākha divā niśi
tulasī kṛṣṇa-preyasī
(namo namaḥ) (3)

dīnera ei abhilāṣa,
māyāpure/navadvīpe dio vāsa,
aṅgete mākhiba sadā
dhāma dhūli rāśi
tulasī kṛṣṇa-preyasī
(namo namaḥ) (4)

tomāra ārati lāgi,
dhūpa, dīpa, puṣpa māgī,
mahimā bākhāni ebe
hau more khuśī
tulasī kṛṣṇa-preyasī
(namo namaḥ) (5)

jagatera jata phūla,
kabhu nahe samatula,
sarva-tyaji kṛṣṇa tava patra
mañjarī vilāsī
tulasī kṛṣṇa-preyasī
(namo namaḥ) (6)

ogo vṛnde mahārānī!
tomāra pādapa tale,
deva ṛṣi kutūhale,
sarva-tīrtha la'ye tā'rā
hana adhivāsī
tulasī kṛṣṇa-preyasī
(namo namaḥ) (7)

śrī-keśava ati dīna,
sādhana-bhajana-hīna,
tomāra āśraye sadā
nāmānande bhāsi
tulasī kṛṣṇa-preyasī
(namo namaḥ) (8)

Verses 1 and 2. First of all, obeisances are offered to Śrī Tulasī, or Vṛndā-devī, as the beloved of Kṛṣṇa. She has been described as a very compassionate *sakhī* who bestows the eternal service of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Yugala. "To those who take shelter of you, you kindly award *kṛṣṇa-sevā* and the fortune of eternal residence in Vṛndāvana." Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura has glorified Śrīmatī Vṛndā-devī in his Śrī *Vṛndā-devyāṣṭakam*:

samasta-vaikuṇṭha-śiromanau śrī-
kṛṣṇasya vṛndāvana-dhanya-dhāmni
dattādhikāre vṛṣabhānu-putryā
vṛnde! numas te caraṇāravindam (3)

tvad-ājñayā pallava-puṣpa-bhṛṅga-
mṛgādibhir mādhava-keli-kuñjāḥ
madhvādibhir bhānti vibhūṣyamāṇā
vṛnde! numas te caraṇāravindam (4)

tvadīya-dūtyena nikuñja-yūno-
ratyutkayoḥ keli-vilāsa-siddhiḥ
tvat-saubhagaṁ kena nirucyatām tad
vṛnde! numas te caraṇāravindam (5)

rāsābhilāṣo vasatiś ca vṛndā-
vane tvad-īśāṅghri-saroja-sevā
labhyā ca puṁsāṁ kṛpayā tavaiva
vṛnde! numas te caraṇāravindam (6)

tvaṁ kīrtyase sātvata-tantra-vidbhir
līlābhidhānā kila kṛṣṇa-śaktiḥ
tavaiva mūrtis tulasī nṛ-loke
vṛnde! numas te caraṇāravindam (7)

bhaktyā vihinā aparādha-lakṣaiḥ
kṣiptaś ca kāmādi-taraṅga-madhye
kṛpāmayi! tvāṁ śaranaṁ prapannā
vṛnde! numas te caraṇāravindam (8)

"Śrī Vṛṣabhānu-rāja-nandinī Śrī Rādhikā has given you authority over Śrī Kṛṣṇa's most sacred abode, Vṛndāvana, which is fully endowed with unlimited

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qualities and is the crown jewel of all the Vaikuṇṭha planets. On your order, the loveliness of the spring season eternally maintains the supreme beauty of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's Vṛndāvana pleasure groves, which are decorated with different types of leaves and fragrant flowers, and are full of bumblebees, deer, peacocks, male and female parrots, and other birds and animals.

"The pleasure pastimes of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, who are always eager to relish such loving exchanges, are only made successful by your assistance as an extremely skilled envoy. In other words, you become a messenger (*dūtī*) just to arrange Their union, which would otherwise be very difficult. You assist in many different ways to bring about the success of Their amorous pastimes (*līlā-vilāsa*). Who in this world can describe the limit of your fortune? I repeatedly bow down at your lotus feet.

"O Vṛndā, by your mercy the greed to have *darśana* of the *rāsa-līlā* arises in the heart of Kṛṣṇa's devotees. By your mercy they obtain residence in Śrī Vṛndāvana-dhāma and receive service to the lotus feet of their *prāṇa-vallabha*, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava. I repeatedly offer obeisances at your lotus feet.

"O Vṛndā, in the *bhakti-tantras* composed by devotees such as Śrī Nārada, expert and learned scholars have described you as Śrī Kṛṣṇa's *līlā-śakti*, His pastime potency. You expand yourself in this world as the renowned Śrī Tulasī-devī in the form of a plant. I offer my obeisances unto you again and again.

"O merciful *devī*, I am devoid of *bhakti*, and therefore full of hundreds of offences, and because of this I am sinking in the waves of lust, anger and all base qualities in the ocean of material existence. I surrender at your lotus feet because I have no other alternative. Please be merciful and deliver me from the impassable material ocean. I offer my obeisances at your lotus feet again and again. O Vṛndā, beloved of Kṛṣṇa, please be merciful to this surrendered soul and give me residence in Vṛndāvana."

Verse 3. Śrīla Gurudeva continues in his *āratī-kīrtana*, "O Vṛndā, we pray at your lotus feet again and again. Please give us your guidance and bestow upon us the service of Śrī Gaurahari, who is Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself, endowed with the internal mood and effulgent lustre of Śrīmatī Rādhikā, so that we may be immersed day and night in that service." Someone may raise the question, "Śrīmatī Tulasī is the beloved of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and she can bestow *kṛṣṇa-sevā*. How, then, can she give the service of Śrī Śacīnandana Gaurahari?" The answer is, "She can, because Śrī Śacīnandana Gaurahari and Śrī Kṛṣṇa are *abhinna-para-tattva*, the non-different Absolute Truth." The Lord of all pastimes, *līlā-puruṣottama* Śrī Kṛṣṇa, is *rasika-śekhara*, the enjoyer of the topmost mellows, and *parama-karuṇa*, supremely merciful. He adopts the mood and complexion of Śrīmatī Rādhikā and appears in the form of Śrī Śacīnandana Gaurahari to distribute *rāga-mārga-bhakti* and to fulfil his own three internal desires. These are (1) to know the greatness of Śrīmatī Rādhikā's love, (2) to know the sweetness of His form, qualities, flute and pastimes, which Śrīmatī Rādhikā relishes through Her love and (3) to know the happiness that Śrīmatī Rādhikā derives on tasting His sweetness. Therefore, Śrī Tulasī-devī is also very dear to Śrī Gaurahari and can certainly give service to Him and love for Him.

Almost all the associates of Kṛṣṇa appeared with Śrī Gaurahari in male forms; very few appeared in female forms. In Kali-yuga, Śrī Vṛndā-devī has also appeared in the form of the *tulasī* tree to make *kṛṣṇa-bhakti* more easily

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attainable. Śrīla Advaita Ācārya, who is the incarnation of Mahāviṣṇu, adopted the easiest and most effective process to entreat Śrī Kṛṣṇa to advent in this world. The method of worship was to offer some *tulasī* leaves with Gaṅgā water to Svayam Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and with great eagerness to chant the name of Kṛṣṇa loudly. Svayam Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa appeared in this world by the influential and infallible worship of Śrī Advaita Ācārya. Thus, Śrī Tulasī Mahārānī can give the service of Śrī Gaurahari.

Verse 4. "O Vṛndā, O beloved of Kṛṣṇa! I repeatedly bow down at your lotus feet. Please be merciful to this insignificant and destitute soul who has surrendered to you, and allow me to reside in Śrī Vṛndāvana, Śrī Māyāpura or Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma. Then I will be able to smear the dust of these transcendental abodes all over my body and, maddened with *prema*, I will sing the names of Śrī Gaurahari or Śrī Kṛṣṇa."

Verse 5. "O Tulasī-devī, beloved of Kṛṣṇa! I have collected the sixteen items of worship such as incense, a lamp, flowers and *naivedya* (offerings of edibles) to perform your *āratī*, and with them I am affectionately performing your *āratī*. At the same time, I am glorifying you with *saṅkīrtana*. You are Śrī Kṛṣṇa's pastime potency, His *līlā-śakti*, and you are most dear to Him. You are capable of giving *prema-bhakti* for Śrī Gaurahari and the Divine Couple, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. May you be pleased with me. This is my repeated prayer at your lotus feet."

Verse 6. "O Tulasī-devī, beloved of Kṛṣṇa! There are varieties of beautiful flowers in the world, such as *belī*, *camelī*, *jūhī*, *kevaḍā* and *kamala*, but they are insignificant compared with you. Śrī Kṛṣṇa rejects all these different flowers and accepts only your leaves and *mañjarīs*. Kṛṣṇa enjoys pastimes with His beloved Śrīmatī Rādhikā in your *vṛndā-kuñja*." According to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the four Kumāras became enchanted by the aroma of the honey of the *tulasī* leaves which were offered at the Lord's lotus feet, and that is why they came to Vaikuṇṭha to have His *darśana*. All other flowers lack this astonishing power. The honey and aroma of Śrī Tulasī attracts even Kṛṣṇa Himself.

Once, Śrī Kṛṣṇa visited Kurukṣetra at the time of the solar eclipse with His sixteen thousand one hundred and eight queens and all the Dvārakāvāsīs. After taking bath for the last time at the end of the eclipse, Śrī Kṛṣṇa's dear Satyabhāmā wanted to weigh Kṛṣṇa on a scale against a heap of gold and then give that gold to Śrī Nārada in charity. Śrī Kṛṣṇa sat on one pan of the scale and Satyabhāmā put all her gold ornaments on the other pan. After that, all His other queens put every one of their ornaments on the pan, and then more and more golden pots were added, but the pan with the gold was still far too light. The queens did not know what to do, but by Devarṣi Nārada's inspiration they surrendered to Vṛndāvaneśvarī Śrīmatī Rādhikā. Śrīmatī Rādhikā removed all the gold from the pan and replaced it with one *tulasī* leaf dipped in Her tears. No sooner had She done that than Kṛṣṇa's pan lifted and the pan with the *tulasī* leaf sank and touched the ground. Everyone was struck with wonder to see the glories of this one *tulasī* leaf. In this way, we see that *tulasī* leaves and *mañjarīs* are superior to all other leaves and flowers. There can be no doubt about this conclusion.

Verse 7. Śrīla Gurudeva continues: "O Tulasī, beloved of Kṛṣṇa! All the demigods and sages, along with all the places of pilgrimage, eagerly reside under your purifying shade just to attain your mercy. You can fulfil all their desires. I am very insignificant and quite worthless. I simply

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surrender unto you and offer you my obeisances again and again."

There are many authentic statements in *śāstra* to prove that all the demigods and sages worship *tulasī* to attain *bhagavad-bhakti* and that all the pilgrimage places reside under the shade of the divine *tulasī* tree. Śrī Tulasī-devī is served in various ways.

dṛṣṭā spṛṣṭā tathā dhyātā kīrttitā namitā śrutā
ropitā sevitā nityaṁ pūjitā tulasī śubhā

navadhā tulasīṁ devīṁ ye bhajanti dine dine
yuga-koṭī-sahasrāṇi te vasanti harer gṛhe

Skanda Purāṇa, quoted in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.2.202–203)

Śrī Tulasī is very auspicious and she bestows unlimited good fortune upon those who see her, touch her, meditate upon her, sing her glories, offer obeisances to her, hear her glories, plant her, offer her leaves to Śrī Hari's lotus feet, serve her or worship her. Those who serve Tulasī in these nine ways reside in Śrī Hari's abode for thousands of *yugas*, i.e., eternally.

Hence, this *Tulasī-parikramā and āratī-kīrtana* composed by our most revered Śrīla Gurudeva is of great benefit to all kinds of practising devotees.

Śrī Caitanya-pañjikā (Śrī Māyāpura-pañjikā)

(*Paramārādhya* Śrīla Gurudeva's idea regarding *Śrī Caitanya-pañjikā*)

Jagad-guru Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda is the founder of the *Śrī Caitanya-pañjikā*, which protects Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's line. This *pañjikā*, or calendar, expounds the proper concepts and conduct according to the pure *siddhānta* of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, following exclusively in the footsteps of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī. This is why, in short, we have called this calendar *Śrī Caitanya-pañjikā*. Another name for it is *Śrī Māyāpura-pañjikā*, because Śrī Māyāpura is the place of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's appearance. *Jagad-guru* Śrīla Prabhupāda has written that Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura is actually the great person who initiated the tradition of Śrī Caitanyābda, or the Caitanya Era.

Today there are many *pañjikās* that have been popular for many years. However, they cannot be called complete (*pañcāṅga*) in all respects, for they have many deficiencies. They do not even mention any appropriate Vaiṣṇava titles for the time periods. Not only that, they have no provision for ascertaining time in connection with *vratas* such as fast days, the consideration of pure (*śuddha*) and mixed (*biddha*) periods, and the system for ascertaining auspicious times for travelling without impediments. We clearly see the absence of the pure guidance of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Śrīla Prabhupāda in these *pañjikās*, and there is certainly a dire need for an authentic Vaiṣṇava *pañjikā*, exactly following in their pure line. *Śrī Caitanya-pañjikā* has appeared to fulfil this purpose. For the information of the people in general and for the devotees of Viṣṇu, we are presenting the titles of the different divisions of time, which are found in the *Viṣṇu-dharmottara* and *Hayaśīrṣa-pañcarātra*:

(A) the two movements of the sun:
(1) northern (*uttarāyaṇa*) – Balabhadra
(2) southern (*dakṣiṇāyana*) – Kṛṣṇa

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(B) the six seasons:
(1) summer – Puṇḍarīkākṣa
(2) rainy season – Bhogaśāyī
(3) autumn – Padmanābha
(4) light cold winter (*hemanta*) – Hṛṣīkeśa
(5) freezing cold winter (*śīta*) – Devatrivikrama
(6) spring – Mādhava

(C) the two phases (*pakṣa*) and additional month (*malamāsa*):
(1) *kṣaya*, or *malamāsa* – Puruṣottama
(2) dark fortnight (*kṛṣṇa-pakṣa*) – Pradyumna, Kṛṣṇa
(3) light fortnight (*śukla-pakṣa*) – Aniruddha, Gaura

(D) the twelve months:
(1) Vaiśākha – Madhusūdana
(2) Jyeṣṭha – Trivikrama
(3) Āṣāḍha – Vāmana
(4) Śrāvana – Śrīdhara
(5) Bhādra – Hṛṣīkeśa
(6) Āśvina – Padmanābha
(7) Kārtika – Dāmodara
(8) Agrahāyaṇa – Keśava
(9) Pauṣa – Nārāyaṇa
(10) Māgha – Mādhava
(11) Phālguna – Govinda
(12) Caitra – Viṣṇu

(E) the days of the week:
(1) Sunday – Sarva-vāsudeva
(2) Monday – Sarvaśiva-saṅkarṣaṇa
(3) Tuesday – Sthānu-pradyumna
(4) Wednesday – Bhūta-aniruddha
(5) Thursday – Ādi-kāraṇodaśāyī
(6) Friday – Nidhi-garbhodaśāyī
(7) Saturday – Avyaya-kṣīrodaśāyī

(F) the sixteen *tithīs* (lunar days):
(1) *pratipat* (first day of the lunar cycle) – Brahmā
(2) *dvitīyā* (second day) – Śrīpati
(3) *tṛtīyā* (third day) – Viṣṇu
(4) *caturthī* (fourth day) – Kapila
(5) *pañcamī* (fifth day) – Śrīdhara
(6) *ṣaṣṭhī* (sixth day) – Prabhu
(7) *saptamī* (seventh day) – Dāmodara
(8) *aṣṭamī* (eighth day) – Hṛṣikeśa
(9) *navamī* (ninth day) – Govinda
(10) *daśami* (tenth day) – Madhusūdana
(11) *ekādaśī* (eleventh day) – Bhūdhara
(12) *dvādaśī* (twelve day) – Gadī
(13) *trayodaśī* (thirteenth day) – Śaṅkhī
(14) *caturdaśī* (fourteenth day) – Padmī
(15) *pūrṇimā* and *amāvasyā* (full moon day and dark moon day) – Cakrī

(G) the twenty-seven constellations (*nakṣatra*):
(1) Aśvinī – Dhātā
(2) Bharaṇī – Kṛṣṇa
(3) Kṛttikā – Viśva
(4) Rohiṇī – Viṣṇu
(5) Mṛgaśirā – Vaṣaṭkāra
(6) Ārdrā – Bhūtabhavyabhavat Prabhu
(7) Punarvasu – Bhūtabhṛt
(8) Puṣyā – Bhūtakṛt
(9) Aśleṣā – Bhāva
(10) Maghā – Bhūtātmā
(11) Purva-phālgunī – Bhūtabhāvana
(12) Uttara-phālgunī – Avyakta
(13) Hastā – Puṇḍarīkākṣa
(14) Citrā – Viśvakarmā
(15) Svāti – Śuciśravā
(16) Viśākhā – Sadbhāva
(17) Anurādhā – Bhāvana
(18) Jyeṣṭhā – Bharttā
(19) Mūlā – Prabhava
(20) Pūrvāṣāḍhā – Prabhu
(21) Uttarāṣāḍhā – Īśvara
(22) Śravaṇā – Aprameya
(23) Dhaṇiṣṭhā – Hṛṣīkeśa
(24) Śatabhiṣā – Padmanābha
(25) Purva-bhādrapada – Amara Prabhu
(26) Uttara-bhādrapada – Agrāhya
(27) Revatī – Śāśvata

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Statements regarding Śrī Gauḍīya-patrikā

[An article by Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Mahārāja from the first edition of *Śrī Gauḍīya-patrikā*, 14 March, 1949]

The nature of Śrī Patrikā

Śrī Gauḍīya-patrikā[5] is the main journal of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti. The Samiti is wholly and solely dedicated to the service of the Navadvīpa-dhāma Pracāriṇī Sabhā, which was founded by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, and of the Śrī Viśva Vaiṣṇava Rāja Sabhā, founded by Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī. Since the Samiti is the foremost and very dear servant of both these assemblies (*sabhās*) it is the non-different embodiment of them. Hence, we should understand that the main journal of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti is the main journal of both assemblies.

The form of *Śrī Gauḍīya-patrikā* is non-different from *Śrī Sajjana-toṣaṇī*, the journal of the Navadvīpa-dhāma Pracariṇī Sabhā, and from the weekly *Gauḍīya*, the journal of the Viśva Vaiṣṇava Rāja Sabhā. Therefore, the mood, language and line of *Śrī Gauḍīya-patrikā* are non-different from the mood, language and line of Śrīla Prabhupāda and Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. In short, *Śrī Gauḍīya-patrikā* exclusively promotes the message of Śrīla Rūpa and Raghunātha.

The circulation period of Sajjana-toṣaṇī and Gauḍīya

Under the editorial guidance of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, *Śrī Sajjana-toṣaṇī* was first published in approximately 1881, sixty-seven years before the inauguration of *Śrī Gauḍīya-patrikā* in 1949. He continued it for nearly seventeen years, after which Śrīla Prabhupāda was the editor for seven years, so the publication of *Sajjana-toṣaṇī* went on for about twenty-four years, finishing in 1905.

Later, in 1922, Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Mahārāja began to publish a weekly magazine called the *Gauḍīya* as the non-different form of the monthly *Sajjana-toṣaṇī*. This journal was also published for about twenty-four years, terminating around 1946.

The cause of the appearance of Śrī Gauḍīya-patrikā

After the disappearance of Śrīla Prabhupāda, his staunch and intimate servants preached pure *hari-kathā*, following his internal moods. However, owing to various types of divine and demonic incidents, they were unable to continue the real service of the weekly *Gauḍīya*, and while feigning dependence on *guru*, it actually became independent. From then on, the principles on which *Gauḍīya* was based were changed without any check or opposition. It simply supported the policy, "Where there is pretence there is nothing of value." [In other words, a third-class product was distributed on the strength of the *Gauḍīya's* good name.] Many people tried to save the skeletal body of the *Gauḍīya* with poisonous and foul-smelling oil, but their hearts were completely devoid of the real essence, and the *Gauḍīya* gradually wasted away. The real nourishment of the *Gauḍīya* is the *siddhānta* of *bhakti* following in the footsteps of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī and dedicated to the service to Śrī Hari, Guru and Vaiṣṇavas. It is impossible for the *Gauḍīya* to stay alive in the absence of this nourishment. There were countless preparations

5 Editor: *patrikā* = the bearer of a message or discussion

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"The real nourishment of the Gauḍīya is the *siddhānta* of bhakti following in the footsteps of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, and dedicated to the service to Śrī Hari, Guru and Vaiṣṇavas. It is impossible for the Gauḍīya to stay alive in the absence of this nourishment."

of inedible and improper foodstuffs, but since they were imbued with siddhāntic misconceptions and were rooted in disloyalty to *śrī guru*, they were useless and failed to save the life of the *Gauḍīya*.

After surviving somehow or other for twenty-four years, the *Gauḍīya* disappeared because of offences committed by its so-called managers. The Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava world was then deprived of the fortune of plunging into the stream of pure *rūpānuga-bhaktivinoda*, as practised and propagated by Śrīla Prabhupāda. Therefore, *Śrī Gauḍīya-patrikā* has appeared to once again bestow this fortune.

The purpose of Śrī Patrikā

Nowadays, there are many different journals in the world of religion, but *Śrī Gauḍīya-patrikā* is completely different from all of them. This journal will never make compromises in the fearless and impartial propagation of the truth. We have found many journals and books which imitate the pure *bhakti-dharma* but which are filled with misconceptions. Their points of view are opposed to the transcendental conception of pure *śrī rūpānuga* Vaiṣṇavism, as we will show in each respective case. Some invent the principle of observing festivals by mixing transcendental *smṛti-śāstra* with the mundane *smṛti-śāstra*. They do not know that the transcendental substance is never accessible to the mundane senses. Many other journals discuss illusory conceptions on the pretext of *hari-kathā*, and thus actually deal only with mundane subject matter. These periodicals can give no pleasure to the hearts of the followers of Śrī Gaurahari. In some places they instigate quarrels and alliances by relating stories that are opposed to *bhakti*, and elsewhere they are filled with self-praise. In this way they bring no happiness to the devotees' hearts.

Some think that they can advance or modernize the path of *bhakti* by following materialistic conceptions, and trying to hide *śuddha-bhakti*. Others destroy the beauty of *śuddha-bhakti* by making concessions to a particular mundane *sampradāya*. *Śrī Gauḍīya-patrikā* will stay far away from such journals. When sentiments that are actually opposed to *śuddha-bhakti* are unknowingly allowed in *bhakti-kathā*, they can prevent service from being revealed in the hearts of the devotees. With this apprehension, the *patrikā* will always try to caution its readers away from mundane topics. Those whose hearts are full of masses of non-devotional conceptions cannot perceive the happiness of *bhakti* because of their diseased condition. *Śrī Patrikā* will not be able to bring any delight to the hearts of such readers.

The connection of various ethics with Śrī Gauḍīya

Śrī Gauḍīya-patrikā will always engage in critical analysis of the current of Indian thought and in assessing the extent to which it is connected with the world of *dharma*. This *patrikā* will have no connection with political, social, economic and educational behaviour and activities. At the same

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time, it will not silently allow inauspiciousness to appear in the world when these ethics create an impediment in the behaviour and ideas that originate in the ethics of the eternal *sanātana-dhāma*.

When we assess the history of India before independence, we find that the ethics of *dharma* are the root and foundation of all ethics. Our indifference towards that *dharma* is the main cause of our fall down, but when we adhere to it, we can attain sovereignty of this world. *Śrī Patrikā* will warn all Indians by explaining and giving examples of this indifferent attitude in every aspect. *Dharma* is the speciality and also the life of India. Only because of *dharma* has India commanded a place at the head of the world. The key *mantra* that unfolds independent India's victory flag at the head of the entire world is the best verse of Śrī Mahāprabhu's *Śikṣāṣṭaka*: *tṛṇād api sunīcena taror api sahiṣṇunā / amāninā mānadena kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ*. *Śrī Patrikā* will always perform *kīrtana* boldly to teach the people of the whole world the purport of this verse.

Dharma is India's prestige and the bestower of peace

It is India's honour to be a nation governed by *dharma*, which has guided India since time immemorial. The word *dharma* does not indicate any sort of narrowness, deficiency or uselessness. True *dharma* is not the same as the semblance of *dharma*. It is not proper to be disrespectful towards *dharma*, after seeing the false and narrow activities of the supposed flag carriers of *dharma*. Mortal conceptions degrade human beings and immerse them in the ocean of grief. Mere arrangements for food, lodging and clothing, however luxurious, cannot give eternal peace. Even those who have reached the ultimate limit of sense enjoyment are also immersed in the deepest anxiety. There is no need to explain this to everyone. Peace is a separate principle. The objects of this world can never bring about peace.

The language of Śrī Patrikā

Articles in every regional language will be published in this *patrikā*, so that it will be honoured in all parts of India. Those in Bengali, Sanskrit, Hindi, Assamese, Oriya and English will get first preference. This *patrikā* presents itself before the people of the world with a heavy weight of responsibility and its success depends on the internal sympathy and the good wishes of the residents of India.

Statements about Śrī Bhāgavata-patrikā

History

Jagad-guru oṁ viṣṇupāda aṣṭottara-śata Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Yatirāja (the king of the *sannyāsīs*) is the crown jewel of the dynasty of *paramahaṁsas*. On 9 November 1931, at Śrī Paramahaṁsa Maṭha at Naimiṣāraṇya, he inaugurated the publication of the Hindi fortnightly journal, *Bhāgavata*, in order to unleash the flow of the teachings of the topmost *dharma*. The day on which he started the publication was the Kṛṣṇa-amāvasyā, the new moon, of Kārtika, and thereafter this fortnightly journal was published on the day of each full moon and each new moon. Publication of this journal continued regularly for a few years and then stopped.

Following in *jagad-guru* Śrīla Prabhupāda's footsteps, Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti vowed

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to serve this journal; and Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha, Mathurā, published *Śrī Bhāgavata-patrikā* in Hindi every month from June 1955 to May 1974. Then it disappeared again by the desire of providence. Fortunately, however, it has manifested itself once again to promote the flow of *dharma* as practised and propagated by the most merciful Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who advented to purify the age of Kali. We humbly request intelligent readers to make their lives successful by bathing in this Gaṅgā of *prema*.

Śrīla Gurudeva has presented the following thoughts regarding the purpose of the *Patrikā* (5 June 1955):

Eternality

Bhāgavata is an eternal reality. There is no obstruction to its eternality, whether it appears fortnightly, monthly, yearly or even daily, hourly or at every blink of an eye (*anupalika*). These are just divisions of endless time. For those who do not have a conception of endlessness (*ananta*) and completeness (*pūrṇatā*), a part brings them towards the whole. Still, an *aṁśa* (part) is forever a part and *pūrṇa* (whole) is eternally the complete whole. An *aṁśa* never becomes the whole or attains equality with it. Those who cannot comprehend the eternal truth perceive it as appearing and disappearing, and as being subject to birth and death, but this perception is simply false and imaginary. Vṛndāvana and Mathurā-dhāma, for instance, are eternal, but they seem to appear and disappear. Only the Gauḍīyas, the followers of Śrīman Mahāprabhu, can understand the truth of the appearance and disappearance of the eternal abode. Vaiṣṇavas who belong to other *sampradāyas* or to no *sampradāya* at all cannot understand these subject matters. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the only source of evidence for this, and the fortnightly or monthly appearance of the eternal *Bhāgavata* is the spreading of the unlimited and eternal beauty of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

For this reason, the crown jewel of the Gauḍīya dynasty and the emperor of the kings of renunciants, *jagad-guru* Śrīla Prabhupāda published *Śrī Bhāgavata-patrikā* in the *gaura-pakṣa* (the waxing of the moon) and the *kṛṣṇa-pakṣa* (the waning, or dark phase, of the moon). The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is explained, discussed, practised, honoured and supported in both lunar phases. In other words, *Śrī Bhāgavata-patrikā* is particularly essential to convey the purport of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* to the *sampradāyas* who lack faith and conviction in the topmost *viṣṇu-tattva*, i.e., *bhagavat-tattva*, in the form of Śrī Gaurahari.

'Śrī' and 'Patrikā'

The use of the word *Śrī* before the word *Bhāgavata* implies its eternality. Thus, eternality is the *śrī*, or beauty, of *Bhāgavata*. The word *patrikā* means 'the carrier of the message or the discussion', so the use of the word *patrikā* after *Bhāgavata* means that this journal is the bearer of the conduct, conceptions and discussion based on the doctrines of *Bhāgavata*. *Śrī Bhāgavata-patrikā* therefore presents itself to the readers as the carrier of the eternal message of the *Bhāgavata*. It will not entertain any temporary, perishable, changing and false conceptions or articles. There will never be a place in *Śrī Patrikā* for any subject matter that gives rise to absurd and useless talk about eating, sleeping, mating, defending and so on.

Compositions, philosophy, poems and articles that assist or enhance the happiness derived from sense enjoyment cannot be given the title of *Śrī Patrikā*. Thus, *vi-śrī*, that which is without *śrī*, is not worthy of respect. *Śrī* alone

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is a transcendental reality. We will distribute the transcendental tidings that are endowed with the *śrī* (beauty) of the Vaikuṇṭha world, and we will oppose the material conceptions of the present world which are devoid of *śrī*. This *patrikā* has adopted the national language Hindi as the vehicle for the distribution of the eternal message.

National language

Language is the expression of our sentiments, which are the distinctive tendency of the heart. Hence, since its quality determines the quality of the expression, the communication of sentiment is not completely achieved if the vehicle is weak. The thoughts of the heart will be perceived clearly, and will influence society only to the degree that the language is pure, exalted and advanced. We propose to broadcast the sentiments of Vaikuṇṭha in the national language, in the hope that the present national language will prosper and fully express the sentiments of all living entities.

The Hindi language

The majority of ancient Indian languages are derived from the Vedic Sanskrit language, which is the original written word of the Vedas. Distorted forms of Sanskrit are found in various languages according to time, place and people. The native people of Hindustan speak in Hindi to exchange the sentiments of their hearts. The words 'Hindu' or 'Hindi' are not original Vedic words, nor are they found in Sanskrit. The word 'Hindu', instead of 'Sindhu', was used by the residents of Persia (Phārasa) to address the people who lived near the banks of the river Sindhu.

Although everyone accepts that the Vedic, or ancient scriptural, Sanskrit is our root vehicle for communication, still Hindi in its current form has been adopted as our national language.

The usage of language

Since language expresses sentiment, the moods of the people will influence the language. Previously, the only language used in our country was the Vedic language, and the manifestations of *viṣṇu-tattva* were the only worshipful objects for every living entity. Sanskrit was used to exchange sentiments as recently as the medieval period. Today, in the same country, Hindi has been established as the vehicle for administration. In any case, we will adopt whatever system is presently manifest and whatever becomes manifest in the course of time and in the ceaseless flow of change if it is favourable for *bhagavat-sevā*.

laukikī vaidikī vāpi
yā kriyā kriyate mune
hari-sevānukūlaiva
sā kāryā bhaktim icchatā

Nārada-pañcarātra, quoted in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.2.198)

> Any activity, whether it is spiritual or mundane, must be performed in a manner favourable for *bhakti*.

This is the proper perspective on the changes of the material world that occur with the passage of time, and it is only found in the Vedic system of thought. No situation past, present or future can possibly exist beyond the scope of the Vedas or *śāstras*. Therefore, we consider all situations to be transformations of the Vedic stage, and in a favourable mood we propose to discuss the eternal *vaikuṇṭha-tattva* in the Hindi language.

Jurisdiction of the national language

Śrī Bhāgavata-patrikā will publish a message that will free from *māyā* the *jīvas* of that section of the world which is governed by the Hindi-speaking

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"*Śrī Bhāgavata-patrikā* goes beyond the activities of the perishable and ceaselessly changing body and mind, and will publish in Hindi, the present national language, descriptions of the dominion and constitution of the Vaikuṇṭha world. This is why *Śrī Bhāgavata-patrikā* is heralded as the exclusive carrier of the transcendental message of Vaikuṇṭha."

nation. Which part of the creation is ruled over by a nation? Only a small part of the body and mind, because the activities of the nation affect only the body and mind. But *Śrī Bhāgavata-patrikā* will not even glance upon issues that are maintained, administered or protected by the body and mind. The nation will only be concerned with its own terrene, that is, things related to body and mind. *Śrī Bhāgavata-patrikā* goes beyond the activities of the perishable and ceaselessly changing body and mind, and will publish in Hindi, the present national language, descriptions of the dominion and constitution of the Vaikuṇṭha world. This is why *Śrī Bhāgavata-patrikā* is heralded as the exclusive carrier of the transcendental message of Vaikuṇṭha.

Request

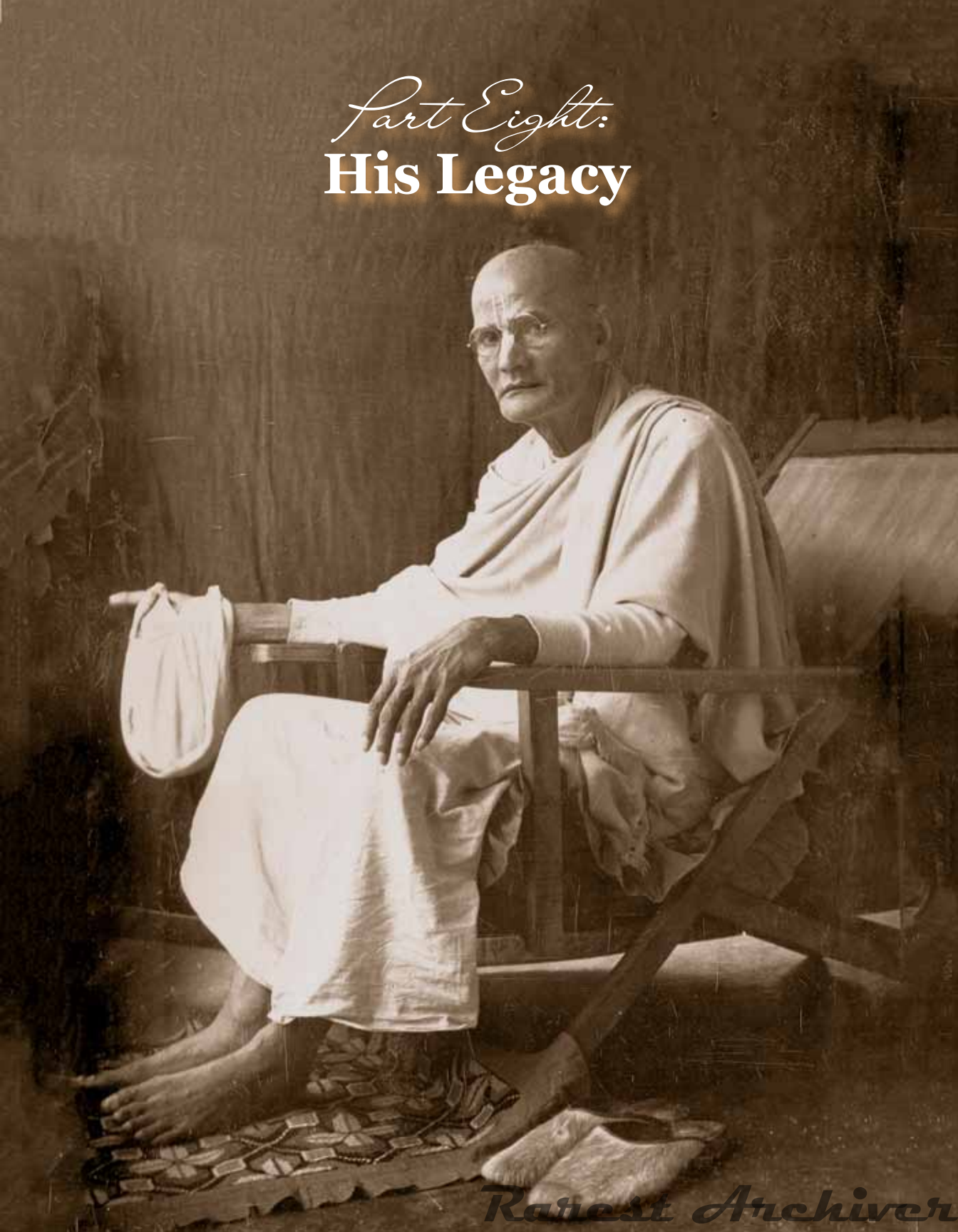
We humbly submit a request at the feet of our readers that they should benefit themselves by eagerly studying the subject matter of this *patrikā*. The language and conceptions of the Vaikuṇṭha world differ from the ordinary language born from the stream of worldly consciousness, and are far more profound. Consequently, some parts of the *Patrikā* may not be easily understood at first. Still, it will become sweeter and sweeter upon repeated reading, just as the tongue afflicted by jaundice gradually tastes the sweetness of sugar candy. Your sympathy with our bona fide endeavour and your assistance in our undertaking will make us feel successful. To achieve this great purpose, we will publish in this *patrikā* the writings of previous *mahājanas*, or spiritual authorities, and living *mahāpuruṣas*, great souls. We will always beware the writings of modern conditioned souls, which are riddled with faults, errors and negligence. This is the unique speciality and pride of *Śrī Bhāgavata-patrikā*. What need is there to say more?

Literature on śuddha-bhakti published, written or edited by oṁ viṣṇupāda Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja

(1) Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's collections of essays (*Prabandhāvalī*); (2) *Śaraṇāgati* (with *Yāmuna-bhāvāvalī*); (3) *Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, His Life & Precepts*; (4) *Prema-pradīpa* (transcendental novel); (5) *Śrī Navadvīpa-bhāva-taraṅga*; (6) *Jaiva-dharma*; (7) *Sahajiyā-dalana*; (8) *Sahajiyā-dalana* (in Hindi); (9) *Śrī Caitanya-paṅjikā*; (10) *Śrī Gauḍīya-patrikā* (Bengali monthly journal); (11) *Śrī Bhāgavata-patrikā* (Hindi monthly journal); (12) *Śrī Gauḍīya Gīti-guccha*; (13) *Śrī Dāmodarāṣṭakam*; (14) *Śrī Rūpānuga-bhajana-sampat*; (15) *Śrī Mahāprabhu kī Śikṣā*; (16) *Sāṅkhya-vāṇī*; (17) *Śrī Navadvīpa-śatakam*; (18) *Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma Parikramā*; (19) *Māyāvāda kī Jīvanī, or Vaiṣṇava Vijaya*; (20) *Jaiva-dharma* (Hindi); (21) *Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma-māhātmyam* (*Pramāṇa-khaṇḍa*); (22) *Vijanagrāma aur Sannyāsī* (ancient poetry).

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Part Eight:
His Legacy

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Disciples and god-brothers of oṁ viṣṇupāda Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja to whom he bestowed tridaṇḍa-sannyāsa and bābājī-veśa

Tridaṇḍa-sannyāsa:

(1) Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Mahārāja (Śrī Sajjana-sevaka Brahmacārī), Tuesday, 11.3.1952

(2) Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Trivikrama Mahārāja (Śrī Rādhānātha Dāsādhikārī), Tuesday, 11.3.1952

(3) Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja (Śrī Gaura-nārāyaṇa Bhakta-bāndhava), Tuesday, 11.3.1952

(4) Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Viṣṇu Mahārāja (Śrī Ānanda-gopāla Dāsādhikārī), Saturday, 28.2.1953

(5) Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Paramārthī Mahārāja (Śrī Pūrṇānanda Dāsādhikārī), Saturday, 28.2.1953

(6) Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Śānta Mahārāja (Śrī Kṛṣṇasundara Brahmacārī), Saturday, 28.2.1953

(7) Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Parivrājaka Mahārāja (Śrī Parama-dharmeśvara Brahmacārī), Friday, 19.3.1954

(8) Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Śuddhādvaitī Mahārāja (Śrī Jayādvaita Brahmacārī), Friday, 19.3.1954

(9) Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja (Śrī Abhaya-caraṇa Bhaktivedānta), Thursday, 19.9.1959

(10) Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Muni Mahārāja (Śrī Sanātana Dāsādhikārī), Thursday, 19.9.1959

(11) Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Rāddhānti Mahārāja (Śrī Bhāgavata-prasāda Vrajavāsī), Monday, 11.3.1963

(12) Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Harijana Mahārāja (Śrī Prabuddha-kṛṣṇa Brahmacārī)

(13) Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Urddhvamanthi Mahārāja (Dr. Vrajānanda Vrajavāsī), Monday, 11.3.1963

(14) Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Paryaṭaka Mahārāja (Śrī Cidghanānanda Brahmacārī), Friday, 19.3.1965

(15) Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Tridaṇḍi Mahārāja (Śrī Rasika-mohana Vrajavāsī), Friday, 19.3.1965

(16) Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Daṇḍī Mahārāja (Śrī Guru-śaraṇa dāsa), Friday, 19.3.1965

(17) Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Bhikṣu Mahārāja (Śrī Haridāsa Vrajavāsī), Friday, 19.3.1965

(18) Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Paramādvaitī Mahārāja (Śrī Rohiṇī-nandana Vrajavāsī), Friday, 19.3.1965

(19) Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nyāsī Mahārāja (Śrī Hari Brahmacārī), Tuesday, 28.3.1967

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(20) Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Viṣṇu-daivata Mahārāja (Śrīvāsa Dāsādhikārī), Tuesday, 28.3.1967
(21) Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Sajjana Mahārāja (Śrī Sudāma Sakhā Brahmacārī), Tuesday, 28.3.1967

Bābājī-veṣa:

(1) Śrīmad Triguṇātīta dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja (Śrī Triguṇātīta Brahmacārī), Friday, 11.5.1951
(2) Śrīmad Puruṣottama dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja (Śrī Pūrṇa-prajña Vrajavāsī), Thursday, 8.9.1966
(3) Śrīmad Navīna-kṛṣṇa dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja (Śrī Nitāī dāsa Brahmacārī), Thursday, 8.9.1966
(4) Śrīmad Vaṁśīvadanānanda dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja (Śrī Balarāma dāsa Vrajavāsī), Thursday, 8.9.1966
(5) Śrīmad Govinda dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja (Śrī Govinda dāsa Brahmacārī), Tuesday, 28.3.1967
(6) Śrīmad Advaita dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja (Dr. Advaita dāsa Brahmacārī), Tuesday, 28.3.1967
(7) Śrīmad Gorācāṅda dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja (Śrī Gorācāṅda dāsa Brahmacārī), Tuesday, 28.3.1967
(8) Śrīman Mṛtyuñjaya dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja (Śrī Madana-mohana Dāsādhikārī), Tuesday, 28.3.1967
(9) Śrīmad Raghunātha dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja (Śrī Raghunātha dāsa Vrajavāsī), Tuesday, 28.3.1967

Parikramās organised by Śrīla Ācārya Kesarī

Navadvīpa-dhāma –	yearly
Vraja-maṇḍala –	1944
Kṣetra-maṇḍala –	1945
Dvārakā –	1948
Rāmeśvaram (South India) –	1950
Vraja-maṇḍala –	1951
Kedāranātha, Badrīnātha –	1952
Avantikā and Nāsika –	1953
Entire India –	1961

Śuddha-bhakti preaching centres established by Śrīla Ācārya Kesarī

(1) Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha (original *maṭha* and main preaching centre), Tegharipāḍā, PO Navadvīpa (Nadiyā)
(2) Śrī Uddhāraṇa Gauḍīya Maṭha, Caumāthā, PO Chuṅchurā (Hooglī)
(3) Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti, 33/2 Bospāḍā Lane, Kolkata-3
(4) Śrī Siddhavāḍī Gauḍīya Maṭha, Sidhāvāḍī, PO Rūpa-nārāyaṇapura (Barddhamān)
(5) Śrī Pichladā Pādapīṭha, Pichladā, PO Īśvarapura (Medinīpura)
(6) Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha, Kaṁsa-ṭīlā, Mathurā (U.P.)
(7) Śrī Goloka-gañja Gauḍīya Maṭha, PO Goloka-gañja (Goyālapāḍā), Assam
(8) Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Gauḍīya Āśrama, Harikhāli Bāzār, PO Iṭānagarā (Medinīpura)
(9) Śrī Pichladā Gauḍīya Maṭha, Pichladā, PO Āśutiyāvāḍa, Dist. Medinīpura (West Bengal)
(10) Śrī Narottama Gauḍīya Āśrama, Caḍāikholā, PO Vicanadai, Dist. Goyālapāḍā, Assam

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(11) Śrī Yāvaṭa Gauḍīya Āśrama, Jāvaṭa, PO Kālnā, Dist. Barddhamān (West Bengal)
(12) Śrī Gopālajī Gauḍīya Preaching Centre, Koranṭa, PO Rāndiyāhāṭa, Dist. Bāleśvara (Orissa)
(13) Śrī Gauḍīya Sevāśrama, Purānā Kāchārī Road, PO Māthābhāṅga, Dist. Kucabihāra (West Bengal)
(14) Śrī Jagannātha Gauḍīya Āśrama, Guḍadaha, PO Śyāmanagara, Dist. Chaubīsa Paraganā (West Bengal)
(15) Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Catuṣpāṭhī, Tegharipāḍā, PO Navadvīpa, Dist. Nadiyā (West Bengal)
(16) Śrī Gauḍīya Charity Clinic, Tegharipāḍā, PO Navadvīpa, Dist. Nadiyā (West Bengal)
(17) Śrī Vāsudeva Gauḍīya Maṭha, PO Vāsugāon, Dist. Goyālapāḍā (Assam)
(18) Śrī Rājarājeśvapura Gauḍīya Maṭha, PO Viśvanāthapura, Dist. Chaubīsa Paraganā (West Bengal)
(19) Śrī Triguṇātīta Samādhi Āśrama, Gadakhāli, PO Navadvīpa, Dist. Nadiyā (West Bengal)

Maṭhas established by the Samiti after Śrīla Ācārya Kesarī's disappearance

(20) Śrī Keśava Gosvāmī Gauḍīya Maṭha, Śaktigaḍha, PO Śilīguḍī (Darjeeling)
(21) Śrī Nīlacala Gauḍīya Maṭha, Gauravāṭaśāhī, Svargadvāra (Purī) Orissa
(22) Śrī Meghālaya Gauḍīya Maṭha, PO Turā (Gāro Hils) Meghālaya
(23) Śrī Vinoda-bihārī Gauḍīya Maṭha, 28 Haldara Bāgāna Lane (Kolkata-4)
(24) Śrī Narottama Gauḍīya Maṭha. Aravinda Lane, Kucavihāra (West Bengal)
(25) Śrī Rūpa-Sanātana Gauḍīya Maṭha, Dān Galī, Vṛndāvana (Uttar Pradesh)
(26) Śrī Gopīnātha Gauḍīya Maṭha, Rānāpati Ghāṭa, Vṛndāvana (Uttar Pradesh)
(27) Śrī Bhaktivedānta Gauḍīya Maṭha, Sannyāsa Road, Kankhala, Haridvāra (Uttar Pradesh)
(28) Śrī Kṛtiratna Gauḍīya Maṭha, Śrī Caitanya Avenue, Dūrgāpura, Barddhamān (West Bengal)
(29) Śrī Gaura-Nityānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha, Raṅgapura, Śilacara-2 (Kāchāḍa)
(30) Śrī Nimānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha, Gāḍīkhāna Road, Vidhāpāḍā, Dhubaḍī (Assam)
(31) Śrī Mādhavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha, 1 Kālītalā Lane, Vaidyavāṭī (Hooglī)
(32) Śrī Madana-Mohana Gauḍīya Maṭha, Māthābhāṅgā, Kocavihāra
(33) Śrī Kṣīra-corā Gauḍīya Maṭha, Bāleśvara, Orissa
(34) Śrī Durvāsā Ṛṣi Gauḍīya Āśrama, Īśāpura, Mathurā (Uttar Pradesh)
(35) Śyāmasundara Gauḍīya Maṭha, Milanpalli, Siliguri

Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja's Upadeśāvalī

(1) Our very life is one-pointed devotion, or *kevalā-bhakti*, which is performed for Kṛṣṇa's pleasure, devoid of all other desires and not covered by *jñāna* or *karma*.
(2) *Bhagavad-bhakti* is attained by *viśrambha-sevā*, intimate service, to *śrī gurupāda-padma*.
(3) Actual *guru-sevā* is service to Śrī Hari, Guru and Vaiṣṇavas.

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(4) The limb of *bhakti* known as *kīrtana* is the best and most complete limb of *bhakti*.

(5) Only through *kīrtana* are the other limbs of *bhakti* accomplished.

(6) Actual solitude is the renunciation of bad association, and the actual meaning of solitary *bhajana* is performing *bhajana* in the company of *sādhus* and Vaiṣṇavas.

(7) Real *hari-kīrtana* is the constant preaching of *hari-kathā*.

(8) Real silence is to speak *hari-kathā* all the time, or to be absorbed in speaking about services related to Śrī Hari.

(9) *Līlā-smaraṇa*, remembrance of pastimes, is non-different from offenceless *nāma-bhajana* or loud *kīrtana* of the pure holy name, whether keeping count of a fixed number of rounds or not.

(10) The performance of *gaura-bhajana* in the mood of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī is the actual *vipralambha-bhajana* of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.

(11) We understand the word 'Vāsudeva' to mean Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the son of Nanda Mahārāja. Vāsudeva appeared; He was not born. The cutting of the umbilical cord and other ceremonies performed at the time of birth were not performed for Vāsudeva. However, Kṛṣṇa took birth from the womb of Mother Yaśodā. Only *rūpānuga* Vaiṣṇavas can comprehend the subtle difference between birth and appearance. Therefore we pray to all of Kṛṣṇa's devotees to bless us so that we can become *rūpānuga*.

(12) *Śrī vigraha*, the deity, should not be seen for the satisfaction of the eyes: "I will be pleased beholding *śrī vigraha*." Rather, the attitude, "*Śrī vigraha* will be pleased by seeing me" is supremely beneficial. Bhagavān cannot be perceived by the mundane senses.

(13) The idea that Īśvara has no shape, no form, no qualities and no powers is all deceptive imagination. The voidist philosophy of the Buddhists and atheism, which is against the Vedas, is a part of this concoction. To accept the eternal form (*svarūpa*) of Īśvara, however, is theism. Those who do not accept His eternal form are certainly atheists.

(14) The forceful influence of *jaḍa-śakti* (*māyā*, the deluding material potency) obstructs our propensity for service to Śrī Jagannātha. As long as we maintain any mundane conception, we cannot develop an inclination for the transcendental conception of Jagannātha. The sole purpose of the *ratha-yātrā* festival is to engage the whole world in Jagannātha's service.

(15) Only those who use every part of their existence to follow the instructions and teachings of *śrī gurudeva* are actually disciples. Those who disregard his instructions are opposed to the *guru-paramparā*, have deviated from the path, and are pretentious *gurus*.

(16) *Śrī gurupāda-padma* is not a mortal being. His existence is established equally in both the manifest (*prakaṭa*) and unmanifest (*aprakaṭa*) states. His appearance and disappearance have the same purpose. Therefore, separation caused by memories of him during his appearance [manifest pastimes] and the jubilation of union in his disappearance are both possible at the same time.

(17) It is imperative to worship the *dīkṣā-guru* first. When we deliberate on this deeply, we see that the *guru* who bestows *mantras* is indeed the most prominent. Only those who give the instruction to serve the *dīkṣā-*

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guru are actually *śikṣā-gurus*. Those who are averse to giving instruction regarding service to the *dīkṣā-guru* can never be called *śikṣā-gurus*. In fact, they are not even Vaiṣṇavas, for they forsake their responsibility to instruct others that they should give due respect to *dīkṣā-guru*.

(18) Bengali literature is celebrated as foremost throughout India, because it exclusively follows Sanskrit literature. It is a matter of great regret that the Bengali language is now being dissociated from following in line with Sanskrit. The root causes for this are a lack of faith in the Sanskrit language and disrespect for the age-old Indian conceptions described in the Vedas, Upaniṣads, Purāṇas, etc.

(19) All problems can be solved by adopting *ṛṣi-nīti*, the moral principles set forth by sages, in the fields of politics, social science, economics, etc. To adopt *ṛṣi-nīti* we have to study and discuss the ancient Sanskrit literatures. In this regard, it is essential to root out the education department's negligence of Sanskrit.

(20) In order to attain knowledge about any entity, it is first of all necessary to take the assistance of the hearing process (*śravaṇa*). Therefore, in the Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya* the transcendental sound vibration, which is accessible through *śravana*, the hearing process, is accepted as the fundamental and foremost evidence.

(21) Those who only observe *ūrjā-vrata* and neglect the rest of *cāturmāsya-vrata* cannot attain the full devotional fruit of *cāturmāsya*. Their negligence displays their disrespect of *cāturmāsya*.

(22) It is essential for conditioned souls to perform *bhajana* under the guidance of a society of pure Vaiṣṇavas. Neither *goṣṭhānandīs* nor *bhajanānandīs* actually perform *nirjana*, or solitary, *bhajana*. Those who are *bhajanānandīs* assist *goṣṭhānandīs* in their preaching of *śrī nāma-prema* by nourishing a favourable mood.

(23) Everyone's house is an *āśrama*. One must live there for the sole purpose of cultivating one's Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The house whose occupants' sole purpose is to eat, sleep and so on is like a door to hell. When the *jīva* accepts foodstuffs in the mode of ignorance, his consciousness becomes averse to Bhagavān. Therefore, such foodstuffs are completely forbidden.

(24) We are *sannyāsīs*, and as part of our service we have accepted the function of reforming society, which is a necessary part of the propagation of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Preaching of the Absolute Truth may cause pain in someone's heart. We have a right to correct the educated society with regard to their thoughtless activities.

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Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Rakṣaka Śrīdhara Gosvāmī Mahārāja

Parama-pūjyapāda Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Rakṣaka Śrīdhara Gosvāmī Mahārāja preached *śuddha-bhakti* and *nāma-saṅkīrtana* throughout the whole world. He was one of the foremost among the intimate servants of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda, the founder of all Gauḍīya Maṭhas. Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣaka Śrīdhara Mahārāja took birth on 10 October 1895 in an educated and respected *brāhmaṇa* family in the village of Hāpāniyāṁ in the district of Barddhamān, West Bengal. His father's name was Śrī Upendracandra Bhaṭṭācārya and his mother's name was Śrīyutā Gaurībālā-devī. During his childhood he was called Ramendracandra Bhaṭṭācārya. From an early age he was a very grave, honest, peaceful and religious person whose intelligence was very sharp. After obtaining his graduate degree he enrolled in law college, but before finishing his law studies he joined Gāndhījī's non-cooperation movement against the British. At this time he met *jagad-guru* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda and became very attracted to Śrīla Prabhupāda's powerful *hari-kathā* and his logical, philosophical instructions. He completely renounced his home and family in 1926 and took shelter at Śrīla Prabhupāda's lotus feet. After he received *harināma* and *dīkṣā*, his name became Śrī Rāmānanda dāsa Adhikārī. He was very learned, expert in Sanskrit, Bengali, Hindi and English. On the order of Śrīla Prabhupāda, he preached the message of Śrī Gaura in Chennai (Madras), Mumbai (Bombay), Delhi and other prominent cities in North India.

In 1930 Śrīla Prabhupāda gave him *tridaṇḍa-sannyāsa*, and he then became renowned as Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Rakṣaka Śrīdhara Mahārāja. At the time of Śrīla Prabhupāda's disappearance, Prabhupāda gave him the instruction to sing *Śrī-rūpa-mañjarī-pada*. Seeing this, all his

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godbrothers could understand his exalted position. The *stotras* he composed in Sanskrit are still sung today in various Gauḍīya Maṭhas.

After Śrīla Prabhupāda entered *aprakaṭa-līlā,* our most worshipful Śrīla Gurudeva established Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha in Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma, together with Śrīmad Śrīdhara Mahārāja, Śrī Narahari Prabhu and other godbrothers. From there he started to preach Śrīman Mahāprabhu's teachings on *śuddha-bhakti-dharma.* After some time, Śrīmad Śrīdhara Mahārāja established Śrī Caitanya Sārasvata Maṭha.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja was a highly learned *siddhānta-vid mahāpuruṣa,* and he gave *sannyāsa* to many of his godbrothers after Śrīla Prabhupāda's disappearance. Prominent among them are *paramārādhyatama* Śrī Gurudeva, Śrīmad Bhakti Āloka Paramhaṁsa Mahārāja, Śrīmad Bhakti Kamala Madhusūdana Mahārāja and Śrīmad Bhakti Kuśala Nārasiṁha Mahārāja.

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Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja

Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja took birth in a religious family in Kolkata (Calcutta) on Nandotsava 1896. His childhood name was Abhaya Caraṇa De. His parents were Vaiṣṇavas, so from childhood he was trained in Vaiṣṇava etiquette. As a child, he would celebrate Janmāṣṭamī, *jhūlana-yātrā* and *ratha-yātrā* very enthusiastically with his friends and relatives. When *sādhus* and *sannyāsīs* came to the house, his parents prayed for their blessings so that their child would receive the mercy of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.

Initially, Abhaya was educated at home and did not attend school until his eighth year. Thereafter he was educated in English and Bengali medium schools. He completed his studies at the Scottish Church College in Kolkata and took his BA examination in 1920. He then joined Mahātmā Gandhi's movement. He married in 1918, during his BA studies. In 1921, the late Kārtika Candra Bose (who was managing director of Bengal Chemical and the owner of Dr. Bose's Laboratory and a close friend of Abhaya's father) appointed the qualified Abhaya Caraṇa as his assistant manager.

In 1922, a close friend took Abhaya for his first meeting with *oṁ viṣṇupāda* Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda in Kolkata's Ulṭā-ḍāṅgā district. Abhaya was very impressed by Śrīla Prabhupāda's powerful *hari-kathā* and profound instructions. Seeing Abhaya's special qualification in English, Śrīla Prabhupāda inspired him to write essays in English and to preach in foreign countries. From then on, the young Abhaya Caraṇa often came to the lotus feet of Śrīla Prabhupāda to hear *hari-kathā*. In Prayāga, 1932, *jagad-guru* Śrīla Prabhupāda mercifully gave Abhaya Caraṇa both *dīkṣā-mantra* and *upanayana* (sacred thread), according to Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī's

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paddhati. After *dīkṣā* his name became Śrī Abhaya Caraṇāravinda dāsa Adhikārī. Thereafter, he started regularly writing articles for the English magazine *The Harmonist*, which Śrīla Prabhupāda had established.

After Śrīla Prabhupāda entered *aprakaṭa-līlā*, Śrī Abhaya Caraṇāravinda began to associate more with our most worshipful *gurupāda-padma*, Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja. During this time, Śrīla Gurudeva appointed Abhaya Caraṇāravinda director of his *Śrī Gauḍīya-patrikā* (Bengali monthly) and *Śrī Bhāgavata-patrikā* (Hindi monthly). Abhaya Caraṇāravinda regularly wrote articles for both these magazines. Śrī Abhaya Caraṇāravinda Prabhu himself established an English magazine, *Back to Godhead*. He also helped Śrī Gurupāda-padma establish Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti in Kolkata in 1940.

In 1958, he left everything – home, wife, sons, business, etc. – and came to Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha in Mathurā. At that time I [the author] was the president of the *maṭha*. While he was living there, Śrī Abhaya Caraṇāravinda Prabhu started to translate *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* into English. On my request and that of my *gurudeva, oṁ viṣṇupāda* Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, he accepted *sannyāsa* in 1959 at Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha. Śrīla Gurupāda-padma gave him *sannyāsa* according to the *sāttvata vaiṣṇava-smṛti*.

After accepting *sannyāsa*, he lived at Śrī Rādhā-Dāmodara temple in Śrī Dhāma Vṛndāvana, and also in Delhi. During that time he published translations of the First Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in three parts with English purports. In 1965, he went to the United States of America to preach Śrīman Mahāprabhu's message, and in July 1966 he established the International Society for Kṛṣṇa Consciousness (ISKCON). In a short time its branches were established in many countries around the world. He wrote more than fifty books on *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*, which are translated into many languages of the world. Thus, to this *mahāpuruṣa* goes the majority of the credit for spreading Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's *śuddha-bhakti* and *nāma-saṅkīrtana* throughout the whole world.

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Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja

Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Mahārāja took birth in a respected religious family in the village of Piljaṅga in the Khulnā district, East Bengal, on 23 December 1921. His father's name was Śrī Satīścandra Ghoṣa and his mother's name was Śrīmatī Bhagavatī-devī. Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Kuśala Nārasiṁha Mahārāja was, in his previous *āśrama*, his paternal uncle. His mother was a disciple of the founder-*ācārya* of the world-wide Gauḍīya Maṭha, Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda. His father, Śrī Satīś Ghoṣa, received *harināma* and *dīkṣā* from our worshipful *gurupāda-padma*, Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, and was an ideal *gṛhastha-bhakta*. His name became Śrī Sarveśvara dāsa Adhikārī after *dīkṣā*.

Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Mahārāja's childhood name was Santoṣa, and he was the second of four brothers. He was a very patient, peaceful, intelligent and religious boy from infancy. During his childhood he was educated in the local primary school, and was always first in his class. He had a remarkable memory and did not forget any verse or any particular subject he had heard only once.

On 2 March 1931, Śrīmatī Bhagavatī-devī brought her son Santoṣa with her to take part in Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma *parikramā*. After the *dhāma-parikramā*, she entrusted her dear son to the hands of the manager of the *maṭha*, Śrī Vinoda-bihārī Brahmacārī. From then on he lived in the *maṭha* under Śrī Vinoda-bihārī's care. In a short time Śrīla Prabhupāda established the Śrī Bhaktivinoda Institute in Māyāpura. Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Pradīpa Tīrtha Mahārāja was the school's headmaster and Śrī Vinoda-bihārī Brahmacārī its manager. Śrī Vinoda-bihārī enrolled Santoṣa in this school. Daily Śrī Vinoda-bihārī gave him some verses from *Śrī Gauḍīya-kaṇṭhahāra*, *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* to

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memorize. When he memorized one verse he was given a candy. Every day he would repeat four or five verses that he had memorized. After a short time he learned all the verses of *Śrī Gauḍīya-kaṇṭhahāra* and many in *Gītā* and *Bhāgavatam*. Within the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava society, he was considered an encyclopaedia of scriptural verses.

In 1936, *jagad-guru* Śrīla Prabhupāda gave Santoṣa *harināma*, and his name became Sajjana-sevaka Brahmacārī. He went to school and also daily swept the temple and the Vaiṣṇavas' *bhajana-kuṭīras* and also brought them water. Before the devotees took *prasāda*, he put out the seats, plates, etc., for *prasāda-sevā* and afterwards cleaned the area. He used to bring fruits, flowers, leaves and vegetables from the *maṭha* garden and would also help in many other ways.

When Śrīla Prabhupāda disappeared from this world, a dark period for Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha descended. At that time, Śrīla Gurudeva gave him *dīkṣā-mantras*, although he had not given *dīkṣā-mantras* to anyone before that. He was also a *naiṣṭhika brahmacārī*, therefore Śrīla Gurudeva arranged for him to get *upanayana* (sacred thread) from the hands of Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Vicāra Yāyāvara Mahārāja, the last person to receive *sannyāsa* from Śrīla Prabhupāda. Thereafter he went with *pūjyapāda* Bhakti Dayita Mādhava Mahārāja and *pūjyapāda* Bhakti Būdeva Śrautī Mahārāja to preach in different places of Bengal.

In 1940, after the establishment of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti and Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha, Śrīla Gurudeva again kept Sajjana-sevaka Brahmacārī with him. After that, he stayed with Gurujī and served him everywhere, both inside and outside Bengal, in ways such as writing his letters. He travelled to all the major places of pilgrimage in India together with Gurujī. In 1948, when the publishing of *Śrī Gauḍīya-patrikā* started, the whole responsibility for the publication was given to him. Even though others are mentioned as the editor, printer and publisher of the magazine, it was he who accomplished all the tasks.

At Śrī Gaura-pūrṇimā 1952, in Śrī Dhāma Navadvīpa, he was given *sannyāsa* by the mercy of Śrīla Gurudeva. From then on he became known as Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Mahārāja. From time to time, Śrīla Guru Mahārāja sent him to preach *śuddha-bhakti* in many places of Bengal. By the instruction of Gurujī, under his guidance, and with great labour he again published *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* (with Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa's commentary), *Jaiva-dharma*, *Prema-pradīpa*, *Prabandhāvalī*, *Śaraṇāgati*, *Navadvīpa-bhāva-taraṅga*, *Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu – His life and precepts*, *Śrī Caitanya-śikṣāmṛta*, *Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu kī Śikṣā*, *Śrī Dāmodarāṣṭakam* and other literature on behalf of the Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti.

In 1968, after Śrīla Guru Mahārāja's disappearance, Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Mahārāja was appointed president and *ācārya* of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti. He was devoted to transcendental knowledge, expert in *bhakti-siddhānta*, remarkably tolerant, absorbed in *bhajana* and endowed with other qualities fitting a Vaiṣṇava. After Śrīla Gurudeva entered *aprakaṭa-līlā*, he edited many books on *bhakti*. He established new preaching centres for the Samiti in Śrī Dhāma Purī, Turā (Meghālaya), Dhūbaḍī (Assam), Gauhāṭī (Assam), Silcara (Assam) and other places.

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Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Trivikrama Gosvāmī Mahārāja

Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Trivikrama Mahārāja took birth on 31 January 1916 (17 Māgha, 1322 Baṅgābda Era). His father's name was Śrīyuta Āśutoṣa Kumāra Ghoṣa and his mother's name Śrīyutā Kātyāyanī-devī. They were both highly virtuous, adherents of the truth and truly religious. They did not even accept water until they had served Śrī Nārāyaṇa, their household deity. They were very much respected among the general public.

Śrīpāda Bhaktivedānta Trivikrama Mahārāja's name in his childhood was Śrī Rādhānātha Kumāra. His religious parents had a very great influence on his life. Since childhood he was a particularly sharp student. Besides studying, he had a special interest in music, art, medical science (homeopathy) and other subjects. He was the second child among six brothers and three sisters. He was so expert in all matters that his elder brother, father and all family members did not perform any tasks without his counsel.

After passing his tenth grade examination he was appointed as a primary school teacher. During that time, he went to visit his sister in a village on the eastern bank of the Gaṅgā, adjacent to Śrī Dhāma Māyāpura. On the way he saw the huge temple with nine domes – Śrī Yogapīṭha. He went all around the temple to look at it thoroughly and later asked the elderly people in his brother-in-law's house about this temple. They told him that it was the appearance place of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and from here the worldwide preaching of the Gauḍīya Maṭha takes place. Śrī Vinoda-bihārī Brahmacārī had manifested the glory of this place. By good fortune, at that time *mahopadeśaka pūjyapāda* Śrī Narottamānanda Brahmacārī from Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti was there disseminating Śrīman Mahāprabhu's *viśuddha-bhakti* together with a preaching party. When Śrī Rādhānātha heard the *brahmacārī's* discourse on *Bhāgavatam*, a strong desire to

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renounce this material world and to perform *bhagavad-bhajana* developed in his heart.

At that time, the young Śrī Rādhānātha Kumāra did not know the fruit of *śrī mandira-parikramā* or *tulasī-parikramā*. According to him, hearing *hari-kathā* in the association of *sādhus* and his *parikramā* of the temple of Śrī Hari and Śrī Tulasī bore the wonderful result of enabling him to quickly renounce everything – mother, father, wife, friends, relatives and wealth, and devote himself to *bhagavad-bhakti*.

In 1942 he came to the head office of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti, and accepted *harināma* initiation from the founder-*ācārya* of the Samiti, *oṁ viṣṇupāda* Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja. In 1944, he completely renounced his home and became engaged in the service of *guru* and Bhagavān. Śrīla Gurudeva entrusted him to the care of *paramapūjya mahāmahopadeśaka* Śrī Narottamānanda Brahmacārī. Together they travelled all over Bengal and India to preach *bhagavad-bhakti* for many days. After some time, Śrīla Gurudeva sent him to preach *bhakti* on his own in various places.

On Śrī Gaura-pūrṇimā 1952, the most worshipful Śrīla Gurudeva kindly gave him *tridaṇḍa-sannyāsa* in Śrī Dhāma Navadvīpa, together with Śrī Sajjana-sevaka Brahmacārī and Śrī Gaura-nārāyaṇa dāsa Adhikārī [the author]. Śrīla Gurudeva appointed him assistant editor of *Śrī Gauḍīya-patrikā* due to his proficiency in Bengali. Sometimes, in the absence of Śrīpāda Vāmana Mahārājajī, he accepted the entire responsibility for the office of the *Gauḍīya-patrikā*. His authoritative writing and deep poetry was published in *Śrī Gauḍīya-patrikā*. After accepting *sannyāsa* he travelled extensively in India to preach *śuddha-bhakti* under Śrīla Gurudeva's guidance.

After Śrīla Gurudeva's disappearance he accepted responsibility for the post of general secretary of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti. He was always greatly absorbed in *bhajana*; therefore he retired from this post after repeated requests from the members of the Samiti. But even after retiring, he remained attentive to all kinds of services to the Samiti till his departure from this world.

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Śrī Śrīmad Kṛṣṇadāsa Bābājī Mahārāja

Śrī Śrīmad Kṛṣṇadāsa Bābājī Mahārāja took birth in an educated and respected family in East Bengal. After passing his BA exam in a college in Ḍhākā, he came to *jagad-guru* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda's lotus feet. Inspired by Prabhupāda's powerful *hari-kathā*, he made a firm vow to spend the rest of his life performing *bhagavad-bhajana* under Prabhupāda's shelter. When Śrīla Prabhupāda was informed about this vow he mercifully gave him *śrī harināma* and *dīkṣā*. After *dīkṣā* his name became Svādhikārānanda Brahmacārī.

He was a brahmacārī from birth and was endowed with the good qualities befitting a Vaiṣṇava. He had no worldly ego and there was no trace of anger in him. Even when there may have been a reason for anger, he smiled and chanted 'Hare Kṛṣṇa'. He had a very sweet relationship with everyone, beginning from young neophyte Vaiṣṇavas to eminent ācāryas of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava sampradāya.

After Śrīla Prabhupāda's *aprakaṭa-līlā* he left Śrī Dhāma Māyāpura and went with *paramārādhya* Gurupāda-padma Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja to Śrī Dhāma Navadvīpa (modern Navadvīpa town) and Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha. During the Kārtika month *niyama-sevā*, he travelled with our worshipful *gurupāda-padma* to all the places of pilgrimage of South, North and West India. He was expert in playing *mṛdaṅga* during *saṅkīrtana*. He observed *nirjala* fasting on Ekādaśī, Janmāṣṭamī and other fasting days and stayed awake the whole night performing *saṅkīrtana*. During the night, while chanting *nāma-japa*, he recited verses from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Kṛṣṇa-karṇāmṛta*, *Rādhā-rasa-sudha-nidhi*, *Gīta-govinda* and so forth in a sweet voice filled with moods of separation. He was such a

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niṣkiñcana and *nirapekṣa* Vaiṣṇava, renounced and indifferent, that he never accumulated any wealth or accepted any disciples. If someone came to him desiring to become his disciple, he very humbly said "Hare Kṛṣṇa" and avoided it. Śrīmad Kṛṣṇadāsa Bābājī Mahārāja was truly without any enemies. He never had his own shelter or *bhajana-kuṭī*; he used to stay at his godbrothers' *āśramas* and *maṭhas* for a few days at a time and perform *bhajana* in secluded places. He performed *bhajana* in seclusion near Śrīla Prabhupāda's *bhajana-kuṭī* in Śrī Dhāma Māyāpura. He had a sweet relationship with Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti. Roaming here and there, he stayed for some days performing *bhajana* in Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha, Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha and other *maṭhas*. He also had a very sweet relationship with *oṁ viṣṇupāda* Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Rakṣaka Śrīdhara Mahārāja, the founder and *ācārya* of Caitanya Sārasvata Gauḍīya Maṭha in Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma. In Vraja he stayed at Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī's *bhajana-kuṭī* at Pāvana-sarovara in Nandagrāma. He never performed *mādhukarī* in order to maintain his life; *mādhukarī* came to him of its own accord. He entered *nitya-līlā* at Pāvana-sarovara.

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Śrī Sanātana dāsa Adhikārī (Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Muni Mahārāja)

Śrī Sanātana dāsa Adhikārī was a disciple of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī. He was born in Begampura in the Howrah district near Kolkata. After hearing Śrīla Prabhupāda's powerful *hari-kathā*, he accepted *harināma* and *dīkṣā* from him, along with the *upanayana saṁskāra* (sacred thread) and fire sacrifice after *dīkṣā*, according to the rules in *Sat-kriyā-sāra-dīpikā*. However, when he returned home, the whole community boycotted him and his entire family; no one would eat, sit or talk with them.[1] Even the barber and washerman stopped working for them. His youngest daughter was due to get married in a day or so and Śrī Sanātana made all the preparations for the wedding before the bridegroom's party arrived. But the villagers defamed him to the bridegroom and his family, so the party turned back and the wedding was stopped. Śrī Sanātana's whole family became very unhappy. They were left with all the food, sweets and fruits meant for the wedding. Surprisingly enough, there was not even the slightest sign of disappointment on Śrī Sanātana Prabhu's face. In the morning he took all the edibles to Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha in Bāgbāzār, Kolkata, and offered them at the lotus feet of *jagad-guru* Śrīla Prabhupāda. Śrīla Sanātana lovingly distributed everything to the *maṭha* residents, who were very happy to see beautiful ripe mangoes and various types of sweets. They had no idea what had happened.

When Śrīla Prabhupāda later heard about the entire episode he became very angry and said, "Such a society should be destroyed!" Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Vilāsa Gabhastinemi Mahārāja also said angrily, "If Śrī Sanātana Prabhu's daughter is

1 Editor: They did so because he received the sacred thread even though he had not taken birth in a *brāhmaṇa* family.

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not married by the day after tomorrow, then I will take birth again and marry her. In this world it is very rare to find such a highly qualified *gṛhastha* devotee as Sanātana Prabhu, who has such *guru-niṣṭhā*."

Śrī Sanātana Prabhu returned home, and the very next day a surprising incident took place. A handsome and healthy young man from an educated and respected home in the very same community came to Śrī Sanātana and asked to marry his daughter. The marriage was celebrated the same night with great festivities. Śrī Sanātana himself went to the *maṭha* to inform the residents, and everyone became pleased to hear the good news.

After the disappearance of Śrīla Prabhupāda, affairs in the Gauḍīya Maṭha became very chaotic. *Parampūjyapāda* Śrīmad Bhakti Vilāsa Gabhastinemi Mahārāja left Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha, established a *bhajana-āśrama* elsewhere and began to perform *sādhana-bhajana*. Sanātana Prabhu, unconcerned for his house and family, used to visit him and preach with him. After the disappearance of *pujyapāda* Gabhastinemi Mahārāja, Sanātana Prabhu heard Śrīla Ācārya Kesarī's philosophical conclusions on *bhakti* and started visiting him.

Sanātana Prabhu was a big trader of handloom cloth and began to help Gurujī's preaching work in many ways. He used his entire profit to buy sixteen or seventeen tents to facilitate Śrī Dhāma Navadvīpa *parikramā* and offered them to his godbrother and *śikṣā-guru* Śrīla Ācāryadeva. Before Śrī Dhāma Navadvīpa *parikramā*, Śrī Sanātana Prabhu took a large sum of money out of his business to sponsor the *parikramā* and gave it to Śrīla Gurudeva. *Paramārādhyatama* Śrīla Gurudeva was a topmost *niṣkiñcana* Vaiṣṇava, and returned the money after the *dhāma-parikramā*. Sanātana Prabhu happily accepted this, although it was somewhat less than what he had originally given.

[Śrī Sanātana Prabhu accepted *sannyāsa* along with Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja at Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha in Mathurā in 1959. His name became Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Muni Mahārāja.] His service to Hari, Guru and Vaiṣṇavas is highly commendable. His and his family's name will always be remembered among the Samiti's supporters. His eldest son, Śrī Nārāyaṇa dāsa Adhikārī, is also a very generous Vaiṣṇava with great *guru-niṣṭhā*.

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Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Pramoda Purī Gosvāmī Mahārāja

Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Pramoda Purī Mahārāja is one of the foremost among Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda's brilliant disciples. He took birth in 1898 in an educated and respected family in the village of Gaṅgānanapura in Yaśohara district in East Bengal. His father's name was Tāriṇī-caraṇa Cakravartī and his mother was Śrīmatī Rāmaraṅgiṇī-devī. During his childhood, he was called Pramoda-bhūṣaṇa Cakravartī.

After completing his education in Yaśohara, Śrī Pramoda-bhūṣaṇa was admitted to Baṅgavāsī College in Kolkata and was awarded an honours degree in chemistry. He met Śrīla Prabhupāda in 1917, and was so impressed by his *hari-kathā* that he accepted him in his heart as his *guru* and often came to hear him speak. Śrīla Prabhupāda gave him *harināma* and *dīkṣā* on Janmāṣṭamī in 1923. From then on he was known as Praṇavānanda Brahmacārī.

During his early days in the *maṭha*, he was the editor of the daily *Nadiyā Prakāśa* and also wrote articles for the weekly *Śrī Gauḍīya*. Śrīla Prabhupāda bestowed his mercy on him and gave him the title 'Mahopadeśaka Pratna-vidyālaṅkara'. He enchanted everyone with his *kīrtana* and his *hari-kathā*, which were filled with spiritual emotion.

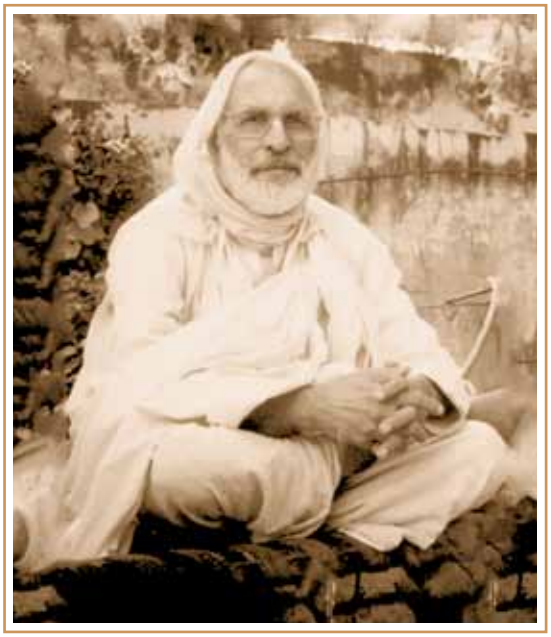
After Śrīla Prabhupāda's disappearance, he took *sannyāsa* in 1942 from his godbrother Śrīmad Bhakti Gaurava Vaikhānasa Mahārāja, and from then on he became known as Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Pramoda Purī Mahārāja. After taking *sannyāsa*, he stayed for five years in the Yoga-pīṭha temple in Māyāpura as the head *pujārī* and manager of the *maṭha*. He then went to stay with his senior godbrother Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja for a long time in Chuṅchurā *maṭha* and other *maṭhas* of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti. Subsequently he

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made his *bhajana-kuṭī* in Ambikā-kālnā, near Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma, and served Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Gopīnāthajī there.

He had a sweet relationship with Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Dayita Mādhava Gosvāmī Mahārāja and was appointed main editor of Śrīla Mādhava Mahārāja's *Śrī Caitanya-vāṇī*. It was at this time that he established Śrī Gopīnātha Gauḍīya Maṭha in Iśodyāna (Māyāpura) and spent most of his time there. He left this world in Śrī Jagannātha Purī-dhāma on 21 October 1999.

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About the Author
Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja

Tridaṇḍi-svāmī Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja's name in his previous *āśrama* was Śrīman Nārāyaṇa Tivārī. He took birth in a highly educated and respected *brāhmaṇa* family in the famous village of Tivārīpura in the Baksara district of Bihāra. Tivārīpura was situated on the banks of *patita-pāvanī* Bhagavatī Gaṅgā, but she has since shifted her course and is now some distance away. Tivārīpura is a village where only *brāhmaṇas* live; everyone is educated and prosperous. His father's name was *paṇḍita* Bāleśvaranātha Tivārī and his mother was Śrīmatī Lakṣmī-devī. Both parents were virtuous, altruistic, truthful and above all, Vaiṣṇavas of the Śrī *sampradāya*. The people of the nearby villages held them in high esteem.

Everyone called him Bholanātha because as a child he was very peaceful, but his parents and relatives had named him Śrīman Nārāyaṇa, and in the future he would be well-known by this name. A special taste for *dharma* was evident even during his childhood, and it was natural for him to always chant the name of Bhagavān, without any order or instruction to do so. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Bhagavad-gītā*, *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Mahābhārata* and other scriptures were read at home and he eagerly heard them with great faith. In fact, he completely memorized *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Mahābhārata* and other *kathā*. After finishing his primary education in the village school, he entered Baksara High School, five miles away. He walked to and from school every day, but in spite of this hardship, because of his extraordinary intelligence he was always first or second in his class. He also had a special attraction for sports. He was a state champion and received many prizes while in high school.

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After graduating from college, he chose not to continue with his higher education. Because of his athletic skills, he easily obtained a good position in the police department. After three or four years in government service in the town of Sāhibagañja in Bihāra, he met *mahāmahopadeśaka* Śrī Narottamānanda Brahmacārī Bhakti-śāstrī Bhakti Kamala, a preacher from Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti. Śrī Narottamānanda, *pūjyapāda* Bhakti Kuśala Nārasiṁha Mahārāja, Śrī Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja, Śrī Rādhānātha dāsa Adhikārī and Śrī Prema-prayojana Brahmacārī were at that time preaching *śuddha-bhakti* and *harināma* extensively in Sāhibagañja. Tivārījī attended their gatherings daily and faithfully listened to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Occasionally he sat with Śrī Narottamānanda Brahmacārī listening to *hari-kathā* throughout the night. Hearing powerful *hari-kathā* in the association of pure Vaiṣṇavas had a great influence on his life. Due to his natural religious disposition, his life changed completely.

When the preaching party left, Tivārījī began chanting one *lākha* (one hundred thousand) of *harināma mahā-mantra* daily. In his heart a natural detachment from the material world slowly arose. At this time he was transferred to a government position in Rājamahala on the bank of the Gaṅgā, not far from Rāmakeli, the place sanctified by the lotus feet of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī and Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī. By now he had become completely detached from the material world. He tried to retire from the police service, but the senior officers, who were extremely satisfied with his service, refused to accept his letter of resignation. In the course of these events, he exchanged letters with *paramārādhyatama* Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja several times. Finally, at the end of 1946, with great difficulty he managed to leave his position. At that time he left everything – his parents, brothers, friends, wife, family members and his wealth – and, completely *niṣkiñcana*, surrendered himself at the lotus feet of Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, in Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma.

On Phālgunī Gaura-pūrṇimā 1947, during the Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma *parikramā*, *paramārādhyatama* Śrīla Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja gave him *harināma* and *dīkṣā*. From then on he was known as Śrī Gaura-nārāyaṇa. Seeing his interest in hearing *hari-kathā*, Śrīla Keśava Mahārāja engaged him in his service. When Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Mahārāja went somewhere for preaching or other special tasks, he always kept him with him. On one occasion, Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Mahārāja had Śrī Gaura-nārāyaṇa take care of his dear servant, Śrī Anaṅga-mohana Brahmacārī, when he became sick. But after Anaṅga-mohana left this world, Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Mahārāja again kept Śrī Gaura-nārāyaṇa with him. Travelling and preaching *bhakti* with his *guru mahārāja* throughout the length and breadth of the subcontinent provided an excellent opportunity for him to hear *hari-kathā*. Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Mahārāja was also very happy to tell him *hari-kathā*. He had the rare opportunity to perform *parikramā* with his *guru mahārāja* of all the major places of pilgrimage in North, South, East and West India and to hear the glories of the *dhāmas*. Especially significant were the pastime places of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Śrī Gaurasundara, who is radiant with the mood and lustre of Śrī Rādhā, in Śrī Vraja-maṇḍala, Śrī Gaura-maṇḍala and Śrī Kṣetra-maṇḍala

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Once, when Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Mahārāja was sitting with one of his godbrothers, Śrī Gaura-nārāyaṇa was also sitting nearby. He looked in Śrī Gaura-nārāyaṇa's direction and said, "I want to give you saffron cloth and *sannyāsa*. I have seen many non-Bengali Indians; they are not able to understand the profound depth of Śrīman Mahāprabhu's elevated *bhakti-siddhānta*, especially *prema-tattva*. But you have taken these moods very easily in your heart. Śrī Rūpa, Śrī Sanātana and our many Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* remained in Vraja for a long time, but they could not find any North Indian devotee who could take to heart Śrīman Mahāprabhu's inner moods. You are very fortunate." Weeping, Śrī Gaura-nārāyaṇa fell at his *guru's* lotus feet and with great humility said, "I devote myself fully to your lotus feet. I am removing everything – any attachment to my mother, the affection of my father, the love of my wife and the friendship of my friends and relatives – and I am offering it at your lotus feet. You can keep me naked, dressed in a loincloth, in white, in saffron, or you can give me *sannyāsa*. Keep me in the way that is auspicious for me. Now I solely belong to you." Hearing his words, Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Mahārāja's eyes also brimmed with tears. He looked at Śrīpāda Sanātana Prabhu, who had also heard Śrī Gaura-nārāyaṇa's words and was stunned. What Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Mahārāja decided after this was known only to him. He was quiet for some time, and then he continued with his *hari-kathā*. Some time later, on Gaura-pūrṇimā in 1952, Śrīpāda Gaura-nārāyaṇa dāsa Adhikārī was given *tridaṇḍa-sannyāsa* together with Śrīpāda Sajjana-sevaka Brahmacārī and Śrīpāda Rādhānātha dāsa Adhikārī, and became known as Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja.

Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Mahārāja appointed Śrī Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja as manager of Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha in Mathurā. From there, on his order and under his guidance, Śrī Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja published *Śrī Bhāgavata-patrikā* (a monthly journal in Hindi) and Hindi translation of *Jaiva-dharma*, *Śrī Caitanya-śikṣāmṛta*, *Śrīman Mahāprabhu kī Śikṣā*, *Bhakti-tattva-viveka*, *Upadeśāmṛta*, *Śrī Śikṣāṣṭaka*, *Śrī Manaḥ-śikṣā*, *Sindhu-Bindu-Kaṇā*, *Śrī Gauḍīya-kaṇṭhahāra*, *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* (with Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura's commentary) and many other books. Śrī Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja preached *śuddha-bhakti* throughout India and also internationally, in the United States, England, France, Holland, Canada, Mexico, Costa Rica, Australia, Malaysia, Fiji, Japan, Hawaii and other big and small countries of the world. His books have been translated into English, French, Spanish, German, Russian, Turkish, Oriya, Kannada, etc. Thus, throughout his entire life he was enthusiastically devoted to the serving the innermost desire of Śrī Hari, Guru and Vaiṣṇavas.

Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja departed this world on 29 December 2010, in Śrī Jagannātha Purī, on the appearance day of his beloved godbrother, Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja. He had continued travelling and spreading the message of our *rūpānuga guru-varga* up until the time of his departure, travelling to places such as America, Italy, Spain, Mexico, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, China, Hong Kong, Mauritius, South Africa and Brazil. He was widely acclaimed throughout Vraja-maṇḍala and Gaura-maṇḍala as the unquestionable upholder of Gauḍīya *siddhānta*. Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas recognize him as an empowered representative of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and glorify his invaluable

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contribution in promoting *sanātana-dharma* around the world.

English titles published by Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja

● Arcana-dīpikā ● Beyond Nīrvāṇa ● Bhagavad-gītā ● Bhajana-rahasya ● Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindu-bindu ● Bhakti-rasāyana ● Bhakti-tattva-viveka ● Brahma-saṁhitā ● Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta (Vol. 2.1) ● Caitanya Mahāprabhu – The Original Form of Godhead ● Camatkāra-candrikā ● Dāmodara-līlā-mādhurī ● Dāmodarāṣṭakam ● Essence of All Advice ● Essence of Bhagavad-gītā ● Fearless Prince ● Five Essential Essay ● Gauḍīya Gīti-guccha ● Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism versus Sahajiyāism ● Gaura-vāṇī Pracāriṇe ● Gift of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu ● Gīta-govinda ● Going Beyond Vaikuṇṭha ● Gopī-gīta ● Guru-devatātmā ● Harināma Mahā-mantra ● Harmony ● Hidden Path of Devotion ● Impressions of Bhakti ● Jaiva-dharma ● Journey of the Soul ● Letters from America ● Maharṣi Durvāsā and Śrī Durvāsā-āśrama ● Manaḥ-śikṣā ● My Śikṣā-guru and Priya-bandhu ● Navadvīpa-dhāma-māhātmya ● Navadvīpa-dhāma ● Nectar of Govinda-līlā ● Origin of Ratha-yātrā ● Our Eternal Nature ● Pinnacle of Devotion ● Prabandhāvalī ● Prema-sampuṭa ● Rādhā-kṛṣṇa-gaṇoddeśa-dīpikā ● Rāya Rāmānanda Saṁvāda ● Saṅkalpa-kalpadrumaḥ ● Secrets of the Undiscovered Self ● Secret Truths of the Bhāgavatam ● Śikṣāṣṭaka ● Śiva-tattva ● Ślokāmṛtam ● Ślokāmṛtam-bindu ● Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī – His Life and Teachings ● The Butter Thief ● Their Lasting Relation ● To Be Controlled by Love ● True Conception of Guru-tattva ● Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi-kiraṇa ● Upadeśāmṛta ● Utkalikā-vallarī ● Vaiṣṇava-siddhānta-mālā ● Veṇu-gīta ● Vraja-maṇḍala Parikramā ● Walking with a Saint (2007, 2008, 2009) ● Way of Love ● Rays of The Harmonist (periodical)

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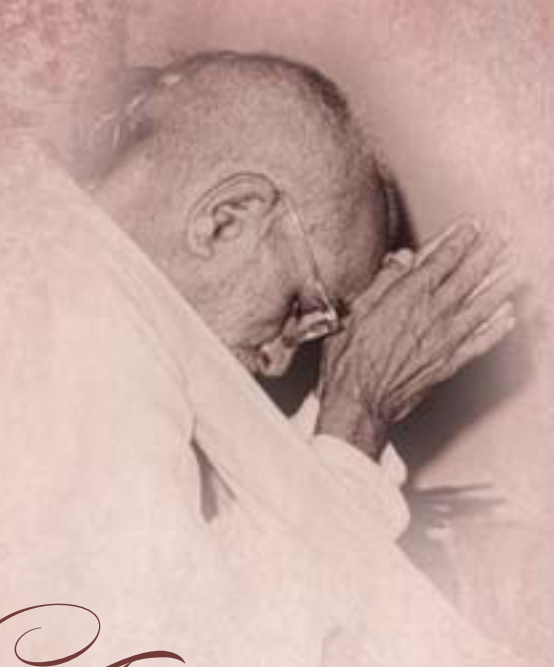
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The life of Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja exemplified the lofty principles he taught, and thus he is known as *ācārya*. Just as a lion (*kesarī*) is gentle with her cubs and ferocious with those who may harm them, he was affectionate with those who sincerely aspired for Truth and roared like a lion when erroneous philosophy threatened their safe passage to the spiritual world.

This biography not only describes his glorious life, spotless character and courageous preaching but it also details his lucid and penetrating delivery of Gauḍīya philosophy. It depicts the qualities of a true *ācārya*, who with his every breath demonstrated the pinnacle of loyalty to *guru* and who resolutely protected the tenets of his disciplic lineage for the benefit of the souls of this world.



The sole measure of spiritual advancement is wholesale dedication to one's bona fide *guru*. Nothing else. Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja was the perfect embodiment of such devotion. From the time of his first meeting with his *gurudeva* in 1946, he rendered him personal service and took responsibility for his mission. Moreover, he fully imbibed his *guru's* teachings on the Absolute Truth and meticulously practised them in every aspect of his life.

His spiritual potency was acknowledged by Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas the world over, and he is revered as an ideal servant of *guru* who can in turn guide all living beings. This book is an insight into his absorption in his *gurudeva's* transcendental words and deeds.

I offer obeisances to the lion-like *ācārya, oṁ viṣṇupāda* Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja. He is a thoroughly transcendental personality, and he nurtures with great affection those who have taken shelter of him. He is always aggrieved to see the suffering of the conditioned souls, and he bestows *prema* for the glorious holy name.

Śrī Keśavācāryāṣṭakam (verses 1 and 4)



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